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CONTENTS

Green Spillover: Deriving Pro-environmental Behavior on job and Off-job through Environmental Specific Servant Leadership

Muhammad Mumtaz Khan* Syed Saad Ahmed** Essa Khan***

Abstract

The study was conducted to explore the role of environmental specific servant leadership to promote on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior. Additionally, the study attempted to unfurl the mediating role of environmental passion linking environmental specific servant leadership to on job and off-job pro-environmental behavior. The study finally obtained data from 296 respondents who were employed in the service sector of Pakistan. The data analysis was carried out using PLS-smart and SPSS. Specifically, multiple regression and hierarchical regression were used to test the proposed structural model. The study found that environmental specific leadership is related to employees' environmental passion, on-job, and off-job pro-environmental behavior. Furthermore, environmental passion was found to mediate the relationship between environmental specific servant leadership and on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior of the employees. This is the first study that examined the relationship between environmental specific servant leadership on on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior jointly. Additionally, it is the first study that established the mediating role of environmental passion between environmental specific servant leadership with both the pro-environmental behaviors.

Keywords: Environment specific servant leadership, Environmental passion, Pro-environmental behavior, Pro-environmental work behavior.

JEL Classification: O13, O44

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1. Introduction

The ever-rising global warming makes its effects felt in multiple ways. The number of storms has increased along with the rise in their ferocity. Wildfires have begun to reach the outskirts of the cities. In such a dire situation, the role of humans as agents to affect the environment has come to the fore (Claus et al., 2018). Realizing the vitality of human as a cause and solution of environmental issues (Blok et al., 2015), the young generation, led by Greta Thunberg, has become more vocal in its assertion demanding the current world leaders to mend their ways to protect the environment that belongs to the future generations (Jandrić et al., 2020). Moreover, with the rise in global activism, customers prefer to interact with those organizations that have environmentally friendly practices (Moser, 2016). Conversely, customers quickly shun firms with environmentally dubious practices. As a result, organizations know that being pro-environmental is not an option anymore, it has become imperative.

Organizations have realized that any attempt towards being pro-environmental can only succeed when all the employees work for it (Daily & Huang, 2001; Ture & Ganesh, 2014). With this idea in mind, organizations have begun to spur their employees to indulge in pro-environmental work behavior. There are two streams of studies to delineate the effect of organizational practices on employees' pro-environmental work behavior. One stream of studies has looked at the effects of overall organizational policy. This stream includes the role of environmental CSR (Islam, Ali, & Asad ,2019), HRM (Zibarras & Coan, 2015), and green HRM (Ansari et al., 2021; Saeed et al., 2019) to promote pro-environmental work behavior among the employees. The other stream of studies focused on the role of leadership in promoting pro-environmental work behavior among employees. The studies used transformational leadership (Li et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2020), ethical leadership (Khan et al., 2019), spiritual leadership (Afsar et al., 2016), responsible leadership (Afsar et al., 2020), and servant leadership (Bibi, 2020; Ying et al., 2020) as the type of leadership to instigate pro-environmental work behavior.

In line with the second stream of studies, the current study intends to explore the role and process of environment-specific servant leadership (ESSL) in affecting pro-environment behavior. However, instead of limiting to on job pro-environment work behavior, the current study intends to see how ESSL brings change to the employee on the job and off the job pro-environmental behavior. The need for such a study is warranted for two reasons. First, employees spend most of their time off-job where they make comparatively more decisions that affect the environment. So to protect the environment, their off job behavior is at least as important as their on job behavior. Second is the ability of servant leadership to transform the employees into other-oriented and community servants (Greenleaf, 2002). As the servant leader provides the required impetus to employees to be pro-community (Northouse, 2015), so any behavior developed on the job is expected to be displayed off the job. The current study uses the theoretical lens of social cognitive theory. According to social cognitive theory, employees can learn from role models (Bandura, 1986). ESSL, a specific form of servant leadership, shows employees and community-oriented behavior. The employee orientation of ESSL succeeds in establishing a positive relationship between the leader and the follower. This established relation gives the leader a source of influence over the employees. When employees, won over by the positive relationship, observe their leaders' intent to protect the environment, they are inclined to adopt the same pro-environmental behavior while on the job or off the job.

The current study is being undertaken with the following objectives. First, the study intends to unravel the relationship between ESSL and pro-environment behavior. Second, the study proposes to understanding the linking mechanism in the relationship between ESSL and pro-environment work behavior. The study intends to use environmental passion as a mediator between ESSL and pro-environmental behavior. Environmental passion, intense feelings, and emotions to indulge in pro-environment behavior, is being proposed as a link between ESSL and pro-environment behavior because of the following two reasons. First, the servant leader's prodding towards a particular behavior can arouse strong emotions because employees, being led through service, regards the servant leader as a model for them. When such leaders push them towards a behavior, they take it seriously. Second, the servant leader raises community concern among the employees and they begin to value the wellbeing of the community. In the context of increasing concern about the environment, one of the ways to show one's interest in the wellbeing of the community is to have a passion for the environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Environment Specific Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a huge change in the idea of leadership. Servant leadership turns the idea of leadership upside down; instead of catering to the needs of the leader, servant leader focuses on the needs of followers (Greenleaf, 2002). Servant leader focuses on the growth and development of employees (Spears, 1998). For this, servant leader extends resources (Page & Wong, 2000), gives confidence, and provides employees with the needed support (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). This serving nature of servant leadership is the very element that enables the servant leader to influence the followers (Farling et al., 1999). Despite the leader's influence, the servant leader still encourages the employees to work for their own goals and in the process helps the organization meet its goals. Servant leadership has been thoroughly defined by Eva and colleagues in terms of purpose, process, and results. According to them, servant leadership is another oriented leadership that is manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower needs and interests and reorienting employees' concern from self to others within the organization and the larger community (Eva et al., 2019).

The rising concern for the environment has brought the issue to the main focus. Researches focusing on organizations have also accommodated itself to make room for enhanced focus on the environment. The concept of green HRM practices is one such move. As leadership is an integral part of any change endeavor in the organization, therefore, the idea of leadership has been molded to increase its focus on environmental issues. Though the initial step was taken by Kathleen and Altman with their groundbreaking work on environmental leadership (Dechant & Altman, 1994), recently researchers have begun to come up with environmental specific leadership. Transformational leadership, because of its perception of being a change instigator, was the first to be used for environment-specific connotations (Kura, 2016; Robertson, 2018; Robertson & Barling, 2017). Robertson and Barling (2017) suggested the use of servant leadership for environmental specific goals. Soon article began to follow the suggestions and studies began to emerge that used environmental-specific servant leadership to be used as a change agent with environmental goals (Afsar et al., 2018; Tuan, 2020).

Environmental specific servant leadership (ESSL) is the focused form of servant leadership that aims to encourage employees to follow green behavior (Luu, 2019). ESSL provides the employees with resources and support to indulge in pro-environmental behavior (Tuan, 2020). Though the concept has been recently introduced, ESSL is found to positively affect green creativity (Tuan, 2020)and pro-environment work behavior (Afsar et al., 2018).

2.2 Environmental Passion

Continuously following an aim is possible when an individual is passionate about it. When people are passionate about an activity, they will demonstrate it by; i) experiencing positive emotions, ii) recognizing its intrinsic force towards work, and iii) being meaningfully connected to their work (Vallerand et al., 2003). Contextualizing passion in the environment requires the same three characteristics. So, environmental passion is defined as a psychological state in which people have positive emotions to indulge in pro-environmental behavior, regard the improvement in the environment as a main driving force of their motivation and consider the environmental improvement to be a source of meaningfulness for them. Besides the exactly collating definition, environmental passion has also been defined as the state of positive emotions that culminates in an individual's indulgence in pro-environmental behavior (Afsar et al., 2016; Li et al., 2020). Passion for the environment works like fuel for people to follow pro-environmental behavior. Environmental passion is characterized by positive emotions that ensures the individual's inclination towards an activity while the finally emerging positive meaning provides the lasting bond between the person and the environmental activity. People passionate about environmental causes not only indulge in spontaneous pro-environmental behavior, but they have also sustained pro-environmental behavior and count themselves as an environmentalist (Afsar et al., 2016). Some studies have related environmental passion to pro-environment behavior and pro-environment work behavior (Afsar et al., 2016; De Bernardi & Pedrini, 2020; Z. Li et al., 2020; Robertson & Barling, 2013).

2.3 Pro-environment Behavior

The gravity of environmental concern has even affected the proliferation of terms describing environment-specific behavior. Green consumption behavior, environmental conscious behavior, environmentally responsible behavior (Lee et al., 2014). Pro-environmental behavior is more encompassing in comparison to its other counterparts therefore the current study sticks with it. Pro-environmental behavior is defined as behavior that has a positive effect on the availability of material, or energy, and changes the structure and dynamics of the ecosystem (Stern, 2000). Another definition given by Lange and Dewitte has described pro-environmental behavior as the commission of acts beneficial to the natural environment and the omission of the acts harmful to the environment (Lange & Dewitte, 2019). The pro-environment behaviors can be summed up into three behaviors; waste reduction, reuse, and recycling (Li et al., 2019).

2.4 Pro-environmental work behavior

On job behavior of the employees may differ from their common life behavior. For instance, a sales clerk wearing an ever-present smile may not appear so friendly when not on the job. The same may be true for pro-environmental work behavior. The difference will be large when an employee indulges in pro-environmental behavior as it is an officially prescribed behavior. Unlike the off job pro-environmental behavior that is mostly voluntary behavior, on job pro-environmental behavior has voluntary and prescribed components. So, pro-environmental work behavior can be defined as all kinds of voluntary or prescribed behavior undertaken to protect the natural environment (Boiral et al., 2015). Employees' pro-environmental behavior is critical for the success of any of the organization's green initiatives. Pro-environmental work behavior has been found to reduce pollution (de Groot & Steg, 2009), improves eco-innovation and corporate greening. In short, employees are the ones who affect the environmental performance of the firm.

2.5 ESSL and Environmental Passion

As discussed earlier, environmental passion is liking and internalized concern for the environment. The current study bases its reasoning to relate ESSL with environmental passion based on social cognitive theory. Servant leadership is a genre of leadership that makes the followers imitate their leader voluntarily (Hunter et al., 2013). The ultimate goal of servant leadership is the development of the community (Northouse, 2015) and it achieves this goal by transforming followers into servant leaders (Eva et al., 2019). In the context of the environment, the followers also learn from their leaders to return to the community by preserving the environment (Luu, 2019). Observing the genuine environmental concern of their ESSL, employees begin to take interest in the environment. Furthermore, employees looking at the keenness of their leaders to return to the community by conserving the environment, internalize the environmental concern voluntarily. ESSL succeeds in building a liking for the environment and voluntarily internalizing environmental concerns in employees. Thus, it can be said that employees draw their environmental passion from their leaders ESSL. Empirically, Robertson and Barling (2013) found environmental specific transformational leadership to be related to environmental passion. As servant leadership is regarded as a transformational leadership except for its difference in the source of influence which in the case of servant leadership comes from service (Russell & Gregory Stone, 2002). Therefore, ESSL can be attributed to create the environmental passion among employees. Similarly, spiritual leadership, a type of relational leadership similar to servant leadership, was found to affect environmental passion (Afsar et al., 2016). In light of the discussed theoretical underpinning and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis.

H1: ESSL is related to environmental passion.

2.6 ESSL and Pro-environmental work behavior

Servant leadership is the embodiment of community focus (Spears, 1998). From thinking to processes, servant leadership is bent upon employee and community development. Especially, ESSL focuses on the firm's role in preserving the environment (Tuan, 2020). As servant leadership's ultimate goal is the betterment of the community therefore it is keenly interested in the environment. Servant leader works for the improvement of the environment in a personal capacity and encourages the employees to do so (Tuan, 2020). Employees, observing the keenness of their leader, also begin to emulate them (Hunter et al., 2013). The followers' response is in line with the social cognitive theory. When employees observe their leaders showing a positive inclination towards the environment and participate in environmentally friendly activities, they begin to imitate them. As ESSL keeps the cause of the environment very dear to it and participates in environmentally friendly activities, the employees indulge in pro-environment work behavior. Moreover, the serving attitude of servant leadership encourages the employees to positively return the favors extended by servant leadership (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). One of the ways to return the favor is to follow the ideas and practices of the favoring party. Following this line of reasoning, we can say that employees can indulge in pro-environmental work behavior. Although scant, there is rising empirical evidence suggesting a relation between ESSL or servant leadership and voluntary green behavior (Ying et al., 2020), pro-environmental work behavior (Bibi, 2020). In light of the theoretical underpinning and existing empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is formed.

H2: ESSL is related to pro-environmental work behavior.

2.7 ESSL and Pro-environmental behavior

Most leaders change on job behavior of the employees, yet the spillover from job to off job is possible. The behavior spillover is more likely when it is internally motivated, when the spillover behavior and the main behavior are similar and when the spillover behaviors can be performed with ease (Hicklenton et al., 2019; Truelove et al., 2014). In the current study, we assume that ESSL can affect the off job pro-environmental behavior of the employees. The following discussion, in light of the suggestions made by Truelove and colleagues, attempts to explain that servant leadership can influence off the job pro-environmental behavior. First of all, the serving and selfless servant leadership succeed in winning the employees (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). They regard their servant leader to be a true model for them. They are highly motivated to follow in their footsteps even off the job to serve the community (Liden et al., 2008). Second, pro-environmental work behavior and off-job pro-environmental behavior are the same. Finally, as we suggest that employees on job pro-environmental work behavior is a learned behavior from a positive role model, and it is similar to general off job pro-environmental behavior, employees can indulge in off-job pro-environmental behavior. Moreover, the reasoning relating ESSL to pro-environmental behavior is also based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1986). When employees see their role model practicing a lifestyle for community-centered motive, they are resultantly motivated to follow it when not on job.

H3: ESSL is related to off the job pro-environmental behavior.

2.8 The Mediating Role of Environmental Passion

Environmental passion is an environmental-related motivation state. When employees are passionate about an activity they dedicate themselves to the activity and persistently follow it (Vallerand et al., 2007). The Source of such dedication, passion, needs to be fully grasped as it has the potential to improve the performance of the individuals as an employee or an individual (Ho et al.,2011; Pradhan et al., 2017) Now, first, we discuss when people are passionate about something. Having positive emotions for activity in form of liking and regarding an activity to be important are the two sources ensuring passion (Vallerand, 2012). This pleasantly regarded importance to an activity when emanates from autonomous or voluntary internalization, the resulting passion is harmonious. When internationalization is complete, the activity becomes a part of one's self-concept and it is hard to detach the person from the activity (Vallerand, 2012). Though it is well established that passion is related to performance, the relation between ESSL and environmental passion needs to be clarified.

Studies indicate that internalization required for passion may come from social factors apart from personal factors (Egan et al., 2017). Leadership, one of the social factors, has been studied for its empowering role to affect passion (Gao & Jiang, 2019; Hao et al., 2018). But, the current study takes a holistic view of ESSL to affect the environmental passion of the employees. Servant leadership, along with empowering the employees (Russell et al., 2002), also works for the growth and development of the employees (Spears, 1998). The serving nature of servant leadership engenders the desire to serve among the followers (Graham, 1991). Once the followers are transformed into other-oriented individuals, they are ready to work for the community (Laub, 1999), the ultimate goal of servant leadership. ESSL, apart from its general other orientation, convinces the employees to work for environmental betterment (Tuan, 2020). In short, extending service to the employees, servant leadership wins the voluntary subordination of the employees; they are showing sincere effort to serve others engender the same thinking among the employees. As ESSL practices environmental friendly practices and convince others to do so (Tuan, 2020). The won over employees pliantly follow the footsteps of their leader on the job and off the job.

Though environmental passion has not been used as a mediator between ESSL and pro-environmental on the job and off job behavior, some studies have used environmental passion to be a mediator between transformational leadership and pro-environmental work behavior (Li et al., 2020; Robertson & Barling, 2013). As servant leadership is also transformational leadership except for its mode of influence that is service therefore the same mediating role for environmental passion can be assigned between the relationship of servant leadership and pro-environmental behavior.

H4: Environmental passion mediates the relation between ESSL and pro-environmental work behavior.

H5: Environmental passion mediates the relation between ESSL and pro-environmental behavior.

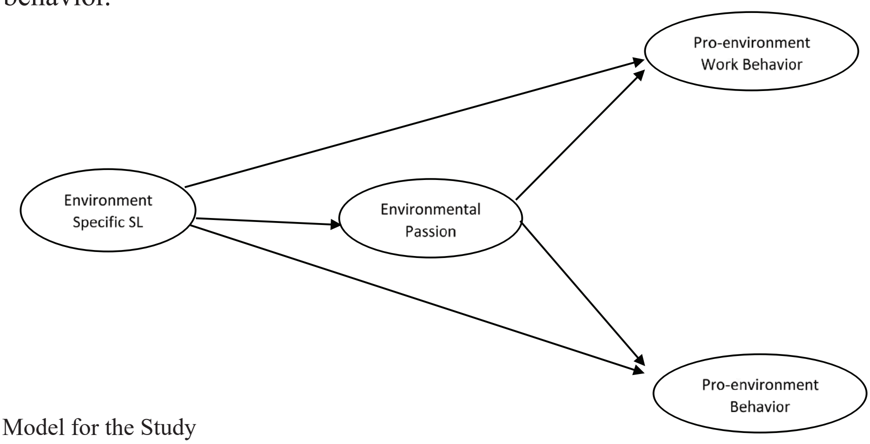

Figure 1: Model for the Study

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

Initially, 325 respondents were approached. Out of which 304 agreed to participate. Once the respondents had filled the questionnaire, the initial screening found 8 questionnaires to be either incompletely filled or unengaged as the respondent checked one value across the questionnaire. Finally, 296 usable questionnaires were available for further analysis. The sampling method employed was convenience sampling. Table 1 contains the profile of respondents that show 58.4% is male and the remaining is female. Additionally, Table 1 shows that 3.4 respondents were intermediate (12 years of schooling), 34.5% of the respondents are bachelor (16 years of schooling). Almost half of the respondents had a master's degree and the remaining respondents had a doctorate. The average age and experience of the respondents were 31 years and 7.5 years respectively as given in Table 1.

Table 1
Respondents Profile

Variable	Values	n (296)
Gender		
	Male	58.4%
	Female	41.6%
Qualification		
	Inter (12 Years of Schooling)	3.4%
	Bachelor	34.5%
	Master	48.3%
	PhD	13.9%
		Mean (SD)
Age		30.932 (8.306)
Experience		7.540 (7.248)

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 ESSL

ESSL was measured through a servant leadership scale developed by Liden and colleagues (Liden et al., 2008). The scale was contextualized in terms of the environment. The scale has also been used by Tuan in his study (Tuan, 2020). One of the representative items used in the study is: 'My manager emphasizes the importance of contributing to environmental improvement.' The items of the scale were measured through seven points Likert scale.

3.2.2 Environmental Passion

Environmental passion was measured through 10 item scales adopted from Robertson and Barling (2013). The scale used had 7 points ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. One of the representative items of the scale is: 'I am passionate about the environment.'

3.2.3 Pro-environment Work Behavior

On job pro-environmental work behavior was measured through Robertson and Barling's seven items scale. This construct was also measured on 7 points scale. The option ranged from 'Never' to 'Always'. A representative item of the scale is: '*I turn off lights when not in use in the office*.'

3.2.4 Pro-environment Behavior

Off job pro-environmental behavior was measured through the scale adapted from Huang (2016) that was developed by Barr and Gild (2006). The scale items were measured on 7 points Likert scale. The scale options ranged from 'Never' to 'Always'. One of the representative items of the scale is: '*I use reusable shopping bags*.'

4. Findings

4.1 Measurement Model

To ascertain the reliability of the construct used in the study, Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability were computed. All the constructs had values that were more than 0.7 which is the minimum allowable limit for α and CR (Hair et al., 2019). The minimum scores for α and CR are 0.901 and0.919 respectively as given in Table 2. Thus, the constructs used in the study are found to be reliable. Furthermore, the constructs were evaluated for their convergent validity. Item wise convergent validity was ascertained through item loadings. Though some item had loading less than 0.7 as shown in Table 2, they were yet retained as values of average variance extracted (AVE), measures of construct wise convergent validity, were more than the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). Only one item of pro-environmental work behavior was dropped as its inclusion affected the associated AVE drastically below the minimum threshold of 0.5. Finally, the discriminant validity was evaluated through hetero-trait and mono-trait (HTMT) ratios. All the pairs of the construct had the HTMT ra tio below 0.85 as given in Table 3, the stricter upper limit to declare the constructs different (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 2

Items Loadings and Reliability and Validity

	Item Loading for Constructs						
Items	ESSL	EP	PEB	PEWB	Alpha	CR	AVE
SL1	0.897				0.977	0.98	0.8
SL10	0.906						
SL11	0.867						
SL12	0.899						
SL2	0.906						
SL3	0.898						
SL4	0.901						
SL5	0.923						
SL6	0.785						
SL7	0.916						
SL8	0.885						
SL9	0.942						
EP1		0.893			0.958	0.965	0.736
EP10		0.879					
EP2		0.929					
EP3		0.893					
EP4		0.897					
EP5		0.883					
EP6		0.905					
EP7		0.85					
EP8		0.595					
EP9		0.805					

PEB1	0.661		0.901	0.919	0.533
PEB10	0.679				
PEB11	0.841				
PEB2	0.662				
PEB3	0.742				
PEB5	0.697				
PEB6	0.764				
PEB7	0.81				
PEB8	0.677				
PEB9	0.744				
PWB1		0.684	0.917	0.935	0.673
PWB2		0.838			
PWB3		0.896			
PWB4		0.894			
PWB5		0.704			
PWB6		0.843			
PWB7		0.856			

Table 3
Discriminant Validity through HTMT ratios

	HTMT Ratios		
	EP	ESSL	PEB
ESSL	0.736		
PEB	0.752	0.613	
PEWB	0.731	0.74	0.863

4.2 Structural Model

Before testing the proposed model, descriptive statistics were computed for the constructs. All the constructs used in the study were either strongly or moderately related. The minimum coefficient of correlation of 0.586 was between ESSL and pro-environmental behavior as given in Table 4. As all the constructs are either moderately or strongly related, the final model can be tested.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics

			Correlation		
	M	S	(1)	(2)	(3)
ESSL (1)	4.644	1.653	1		
Environmental Passion (2)	5.438	1.271	.710**	1	
Pro-environmental Behavior (3)	4.796	1.168	.586**	.707**	1
Pro-environmental Work Behavior (4)	4.956	1.392	.716**	.685**	.789**

** Significant at 0.01 significance level

The current study had five hypotheses. The first three were meant to test the direct relations while the last two were to test indirect relations. The first hypothesis related ESSL to environmental passion. The relation was found to be statistically supported as ($\beta = 0.710$, $p = 0.000$). The second direct relation proposed in the study was the relationship between ESSL and off job pro-environmental work behavior. The results as shown in table xx support the claim ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.006$). The last direct hypothesis proposed a relation between ESSL and on job environmental behavior. The results, as given in Table xx, support the hypothesis as ($\beta = 0.463$, $p = 0.000$).

The proposed model used environmental passion as a mediating link between ESSL and the two target variables namely; on-job pro-environmental work behavior and off-job pro-environmental work behavior. Hypothesis 4 purported environmental passion to be a mediator between ESSL anda on job pro-environmental work behavior. The findings supported the hypothesized claim as ($\beta = 0.253$, $p = 0.000$). The last hypothesis in the study proposed environmental passion to mediate the relationship between ESSL and pro-environmental behavior. The results as shown in Table 5 supported the claim ($\beta = 0.417$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 5
Structural Model

Relation	Path Coefficient	SE	t-test	p-value
ESSL → EP	0.710	0.028	25.308	0.000
ESSL → PEB	0.169	0.061	2.776	0.006
ESSL → PEWB	0.463	0.057	8.147	0.000
ESSL →EP → PEB	0.417	0.054	7.67	0.000
ESSL → EP → PEWB	0.253	0.05	5.041	0.000

Additional Analysis

The additional analysis was carried out to ascertain the role of demographic variables as control variables. The analysis was done for three different models. Environmental passion, pro-environmental behavior, and pro-environmental work behavior were the dependent variables in model-1, model-2, and model-3 respectively shown in Table 6. In the first step gender, qualification, age, and experience were used as predictors. For all the models, the included demographic as control variables were found to be non-significant contributors. In step 2, ESSL was added to the list of predictors. For model-1, where environmental passion is the target variable, ESSL improved the model explanatory power significantly ($\Delta r2 = 0.491$, $\Delta F = 292.335$, $p = 0.000$). For model-2 with pro-environmental behavior as a dependent variable, the inclusion of ESSL as a predictor improved the explanatory power of the model significantly ($\Delta r2 = 0.335$, $\Delta F = 153.087$, $p = 0.000$). Subsequently, when environmental passion was added as a predictor along with the previously added constructs, the explanatory power further increased by 16.1% that was a significant change ($\Delta r2 = 0.161$, $\Delta F = 98.938$, $p = 0.000$). Moreover, in model-3 with pro-environmental work behavior as a dependent variable, ESSL was found to significantly increase the explanatory power ($\Delta r2 = 0.504$, $\Delta F = 301.671$, $p = 0.000$). Finally, the addition of environmental passion also improved the explanatory power of model-3 significantly ($\Delta r2 = 0.061$, $\Delta F = 41.292$, $p = 0.000$).

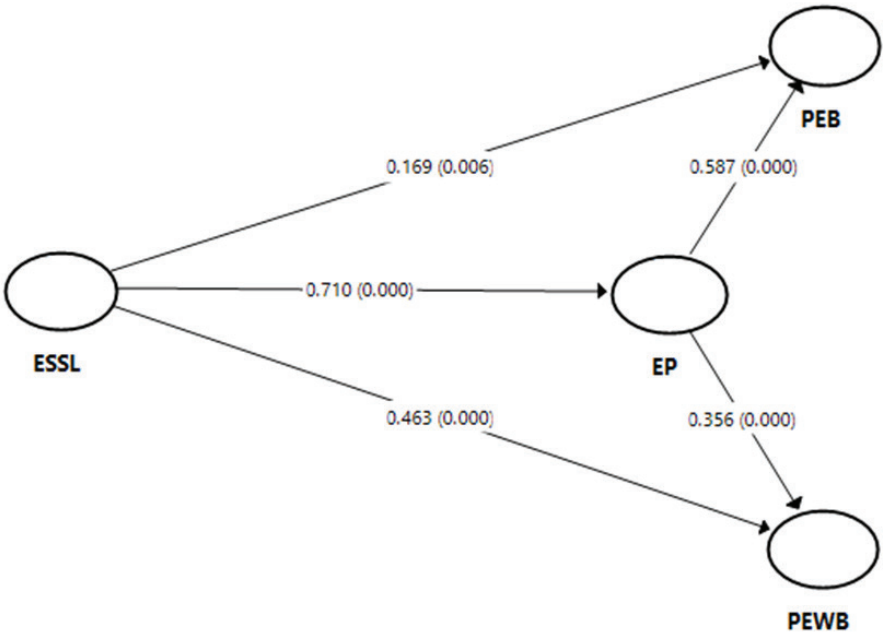

Figure 2: Model with Coefficients and significance

ESSL: Environmental Specific Servant Leadership

EP: Environmental Passion

PEB: Pro-environmental behavior

PEWB: Pro-environmental work behavior

Table 6
Hierarchical Regression

Step	Independent Variables	Model1 Environmental Passion	Model2 Pro-environmental Behavior	Model3 Pro-environmental Work Behavior
Step 1	Gender	-.104	-.038	-.085
	Qualification	.122	.192	.082
	Age	-.099	-.117	-.080
	Experience	.088	-.023	.065
	r^2	.021	.031	0.012
	Δr^2	.021	.031	0.012
	ΔF	1.577	2.34	0.877
Step 2	Gender	-.045	.011	-.025
	Qualification	.093	.169	.053
	Age	.004	-.032	.024
	Experience	-.015	-.108	-.039
	ESSL	0.710**	0.582**	0.713**
	r^2	.513	.366	.516
	Δr^2	.491	.335	.504
	ΔF	292.335**	153.087**	301.671**
Step 3	Gender		.037	-.010
	Qualification		.115	.020
	Age		-.034	.023
	Experience		-.099	-.033
	ESSL		0.176**	0.465**
	Environmental Passion		0.575**	0.352**
	r^2		.527	.576
	Δr^2		.161	.061
	ΔF		98.938**	41.292**

** Significant at 0.01 significance level

5. Discussion

The role of humans as a consumer and producer is the main source of environmental degradation (Hartter et al., 2018; Rajapaksa et al., 2018). The resulting climate changes have instigated global concern. Additionally, the irreversibility of environmental degradation compels us to promote pro-environmental behavior (Markle, 2019). However, being pro-environmental just at the job cannot be an effective strategy. This pro-environmental behavior can be more effective if it is practiced in totality. Being pro-environmental on the job, but not off the job does not portend well for the cause of the environment. So, unlike the past studies that sought to explore organizational practices leading to pro-environmental work behavior, the current study aimed to find organizational practices that can lead to pro-environmental behavior both on the job and off the job. Specifically, the study was undertaken to unfurl the role of ESSL on overall pro-environmental behavior. The following session attempts to relate the findings of the current study to the previously established findings.

In the present study, the role of ESSL to promote on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior and the underlying linking mechanism. The current study used environmental passion as a mediating link between ESSL and the two target variables namely; pro-environmental behavior and pro-environmental work behavior. The first hypothesis purporting a relationship between ESSL and environmental passion was found to be substantiated. The finding is in line with the findings of the earlier study conducted by Afsar et al, (2016) that found spiritual leadership to be related to environmental passion, another genre of relation-based leadership similar to ESSL. The second hypothesis proposed a relationship between ESSL and pro-environmental work behavior (on-job pro-environmental behavior). The findings of the current study found the relationship to be supported. This finding confirms the earlier findings in which ESSL was found to be related to employees' voluntary green behavior (Ying et al., 2020). Moreover, a similar finding was established in another study in which servant leadership was found to affect employees' pro-environmental work behavior (Bibi, 2020). The third hypothesis, relating ESSL and pro-environmental behavior, was also supported. Currently, no study has related ESSL to pro-environmental behavior. The relation between ESSL and on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior supports the concern of environmental scholars who were of the view that addressing the leadership processes underpinning of pro-environmental behavior may prove to be more useful for increasing pro-environmental behavior (Afsar et al., 2016). The significant relation between ESSL and on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior ostensibly demonstrates that ESSL is one of those leadership processes that affect employees' on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior. The last two hypotheses proposed the mediating role of environmental passion relating ESSL to pro-environmental behavior and pro-environmental work behavior. Though the results corroborate the earlier finding made by Robertson and Barling (2013) and Li et al.(2020), in which they found environmental passion to be a mediating link between environmental specific transformational leadership and pro-environmental work behavior, there is no study establishing a mediating role of environmental passion linking ESSL to either pro-environmental work behavior or pro-environmental behavior. As employees' pro-environmental behavior is not being currently rewarded by the organization and off-job behavior in not even considered in the policy formulation, the leadership genres meant to promote pro-environmental behavior among employees through transaction leadership, using positional power, or transformational leadership, using idealized influence, may either fail or have a partial success as there is evidence of relation between transformational leadership and on-job pro-environmental behavior (Li et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2020). The end of overall pro-environmental behavior can be achieved by instilling the cause of pro-environmental behavior among employees. To this end, ESSL is found to be a useful leadership approach as it instills environmental passion among the employees, in turn, the employees depict pro-environmental behavior both on the job and off the job.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

Responding to the accepted centrality of environmental concern, a rising number of studies are being devoted to pro-environmental behavior (Lange & Dewitte, 2019; Lee et al., 2014; Li et al., 2019; Truelove et al., 2014) and pro-environmental work behavior (Afsar et al., 2016; Bissing-Olson et al., 2013; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002), there has been only one study to this date that has considered organizational prodding to affect off job pro-environmental behavior of the employees along with the on-job pro-environmental behavior (Hicklenton et al., 2019) which studied the role of work climate on pro-environmental behavior inside and outside the workplace. However, no study has explored the role of leadership in instigating such an over-arching change. The current study comes in to fill this gap. The environment-specific form of servant leadership, ESSL was found to be a leadership style that can bring about such a desired change. The current study contributes to the existing knowledge in three different ways. First, employees are contagiously affected by the environmental concern demonstrated by their leader through ESSL. The genuine environmentally friendly concern of the leader affects the environmental passion of the followers. Second, the study has established a relation between ESSL and on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior of the employees. The study adds to existing empirical evidence supporting social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Employees learn from the environmentally friendly concern of their leader. As ESSL has community building approach therefore the learning of employee transcends the organizational boundaries and the employees learning from their leaders indulge in pro-environmental behavior while off-job. Finally, the study establishes that environmental passion mediates the link between ESSL and pro-environmental behavior both on-job and off-job. Though there have been studies relating environmental specific transformation leadership to indirectly effect on job pro-environmental behavior, the organizational focus of transformational leadership could not spur the employees to demonstrate the same behavior. The current study that used ESSL to urge the employees to show their pro-environmental behavior even when they are off job. The study found that servant leadership caused environmental passion motivates the employees to be pro-environmental both at job and off job.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The current study has two practical implications. At the societal level, individuals can resort to ESSL to promote pro-environmental behavior among their followers. Parents at home, teachers at educational institutes, and managers on the job can benefit from the findings of the study. As their environmental concern is taken seriously by the followers and they follow it because they are passionate about it. Their passion makes them demonstrate pro-environmental behavior, not in the proximity of their leader but also when they are at distance. At the organizational level, the firms can benefit from the findings of the study immensely as the use of ESSL is found to be associated with on-job and off-job pro-environmental behavior. Organizations are advised to train their managers in the art of ESSL so they can promote pro-environmental behavior among its employee both when the employees are at the job and when they are off-job.

5.3 Limitation and Future Research

The current study, like any other study, has its limitations. Two procedural choices; the use of employees as a single source and one-time data collection may raise a concern about common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Apart from these procedural shortcomings, the findings reveal that the explanatory power of the model for off-job pro-environmental behavior is comparatively less than the explanatory power of on-job pro-environmental behavior. To unfurl the reason for this revealed difference, future researchers are advised to use environmental self-efficacy and environmental concern of employees as moderators. Additionally, future researchers can better explain the relation between ESSL and one job and off-job pro-environmental behaviors if they collect data at two different times and from both managers and employees.

6. Conclusion

The idea of a green world is only achievable when employees adopt a holistic attitude towards the environment. Being pro-environmental at the job but not so off-job may have an impact, but the impact will be more pronounced if the pro-environmental behavior is adopted both on the job and off the job. To promote such a holistic attitude, ESSL is found to be an appropriate strategy in the hands of leaders. The leader's practice of pro-environmental concern directed towards the overall community along with the leader's convincing of the employees for the same cause can win the employees to have environmental passion. Once the employees are won over, they would readily indulge in pro-environmental behavior while they are on the job or not.

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Exploratory Factor Analysis, Validation and Reliability of the 'Perceived Socio-Economic Sustainability Scale: An Entrepreneurship and Economic Corridors Perspective

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Abstract

This research aimed to develop and test the measurement scale for perceived socio-economic sustainability (PSES). The context of this study was industrial entrepreneurship, One Belt One Road (OBOR), and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The study developed an 11-item scale for PSES. Data was collected from 425 experienced industrial entrepreneurs through the survey method of data collection. This research focused on constructing and testing the items of the PSES by using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) technique. This study displays statistical processes for the EFA technique to ensure validity and reliability as a testimony for the instrument development. The findings of this study suggested that the statistically tested form of the PSES scale has 11-items under a single factor. This paper is an early attempt that contributes to the body of literature on entrepreneurship and Economic Corridors. The scale for PSES will be helpful for the scholars for measurement of 'perception' of other stakeholders of an entrepreneurial ecosystem like bankers from financial institutions, anchors working in media houses, supply chain providers, Government officials, public, and service providers etc. The research collected data only from Pakistani entrepreneurs. Future research may be conducted by collecting data from multiple countries.

Keywords: One belt one road (OBOR), China Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC), Perceived Socio-economic sustainability, Entrepreneurship, Scale development, Reliability and validity, Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

JEL Classification: F63, F60

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1. Introduction

The concept of one belt One Road (OBOR) was introduced by China in 2013. It is a multi-trillion dollars investment scheme that has global as well as regional agendas of socioeconomic sustainability (Rahman & Shurong, 2017). The five pillars of trade under the OBOR initiative are mainly political willpower, capital investment in shape of foreign direct investment, infrastructure development, promotion of regional and local trade and people-to-people exchange programs etc. (Konings, 2018). The whole project of OBOR consists of six Economic Corridors; China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is one corridor on OBOR (Zhang et al., 2018).

CPEC provides China with the shortest route to the markets of the Middle East and Europe. The road included in CPEC starts at Xinjiang-Kashagar, China and ends at Gwadar-Port, Pakistan, with a total length of approximately 3000 kilometres (Syed & Tariq, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). On the other hand, CPEC is also helpful for Pakistan to achieve entrepreneurial growth, high tech- industrialization, and socioeconomic sustainability. The establishment of 9 country-wide Special Economic Zones (SEZs) joined with technology parks in different areas of Pakistan are added advantage for the entrepreneurial and industrial revolution in the country (Ali & Faisal, 2017). Initiatives like SEZs and technology transfer are the major ingredients to achieve socioeconomic sustainability in Pakistan (Syed & Tariq, 2020). Side by side with the belief in the benefits of CPEC, there also exists in Pakistan a negative perception about the project (CPEC). Some scholars stated that there is a mistrust between the Pakistani government and Pakistani entrepreneurs on providing entrepreneurial opportunities available under CPEC (Arif, 2018). Other scholars argued that there is fear among the Pakistani entrepreneurs that CPEC will cause a shutdown of small and medium size enterprises because Pakistani SMEs are not competitive against Chinese cost-effective products (Ahmad et al ., 2018).

Considering the said debates about the positive and negative potential of CPEC in Pakistan, it is sufficient to believe that a negative perception exists among the Pakistani entrepreneurs that CPEC may provide more entrepreneurial opportunities to the global entrepreneurs as compared to the Pakistani entrepreneurs. This adverse perception of the entrepreneurs is a major contributing factor to such narratives that Pakistan may have less chances to achieve socioeconomic sustainability through CPEC initiatives. These adverse perceptions against CPEC are a helping tool to say that CPEC is a Chinese dream which is materializing through Pakistan (Ramay, 2016).

The increasing importance of ‘sustainability is highly recognized in different socioeconomic areas. Various studies on socio-economic sustainability have documented its usefulness. Some researchers investigate it as a positive global agenda (Talukhaba et al., 2005; Xu et al., 2017) while other scholars have offered qualitative description by highlighting 11-sustainable socio-economic indicators (Akotia, 2014; Dalevska et al ., 2019). These authors supplemented a positive debate on socio-economic sustainability, but they have differing opinions regarding the measurement scale of socioeconomic sustainability. Further, in the debate among these scholars for the instrument of socioeconomic sustainability, the perception of entrepreneurs was ignored which is covered by the present research.

OBOR initiative leads socio-economic collaborations everywhere in the globe (Bode et al., 2019). For socioeconomic collaborations under economic corridors, it is important to explore the phenomenon of the positive or negative perceptions of different stakeholders involved in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The perception about socioeconomic sustainability is a major contributing ingredient for the success of socio-economic collaborations at country, regional and beyond regional levels (Brooks et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al ., 2019). Drawing on the existing literature, it has been identified that there is a need to develop a valid and reliable scale to measure the perception of different stakeholders (either positive or negative) about socioeconomic sustainability. The present study is among the first few studies which attempted instrument development to measure the '*perception*' of industrial-entrepreneurs for '*socioeconomic sustainability*'.

2. Literature Review

Since 2008, United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has organized high-level segments to prepare and implement the theme of "Sustainable Goals" (Celik et al., 2009; Sachs et al., 2019). For this purpose, many roundtables were held all around the globe. As a result, ECOSCO suggested to develop and adopt sustainable economic and social goals as major policy guidelines for global interventions (Abbott & Bernstein, 2015). The council suggested replacing the existing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with proposed 17-Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Gupta & Nilsson, 2017; Kroll & Zipperer, 2020). A well-known scholar, Wals (2007), hypothesized that to achieve infinite co-existence of humans on earth, the principle of 'sustainability be ensured on every level of economic and social life.

This research analyzed the above said argument through extensive literature study. This research found that during the human age on earth from 2000 to 2015, information and communication technologies (ICTs) were found a major source to achieve fast track developmental goals (Foley et al., 2017; Vinuesa et al., 2020). Different stakeholders under the entrepreneurial ecosystem have applied smart machines and digital policies along with ICTs practices for the success of entrepreneurship (Ivanova et al., 2019; Vlasov et al., 2019). After the achievement of the basic mechanism of ICTs, the development goals have been achieved by exponential multiplication. The higher level of achievement of development goals would cause doubt on sustainability (Tsai & Liao, 2017). To avoid the adverse effects of ICTs, the United Nations has accepted and implemented the narrative of 17-SDGs since January 2015

(Wellard, 2017). Among the 17-SDGs, sustainable socio-economic indicators like no poverty, zero hunger, good health and education, industrial innovation, and economic growth are the major agenda of the United Nation. Changing the paradigm with a major shift from 'developmental goals' towards 'sustainable goals', the sustainable socioeconomic indicators become an important aspect in international collaborations all around the globe.

Side by side with the implementation of 17-SDGs as a replacement of MDGs, the world also witnessed a new paradigm shift for regional collaborations from free trade agreements to economic corridors (Grubel, 1982; Rehman et al., 2020). Economic corridors are considered as assurance for socioeconomic sustainability at country, regional as well as beyond regional levels. The economic corridor is known as joint infrastructures within interconnected geographical areas to stimulate economic activities (Xing, 2018). The types of infrastructures both in social as well as economic areas which relate to the initiatives for economic corridors are sea routs from port to port, roads from country to country, inter and intra country fiber lines, energy projects to help inter and intra country needs of electricity and power, motorways, transportation of both raw material and finished goods through country-to-country railway tracks etc. (Buranelli, 2018; Wolf, 2020).

Scholars have suggested that the new age economic corridors are a replacement of earlier global trade agreements (Zhang et al., 2018) because these economic corridors are associated with infrastructure features that are helpful to revolutionize the socioeconomic conditions towards sustainable goals. Costanza and Patten (1995) defined it as a sustainable system is one that survives or persists. Perceived Socio-Economic Sustainability is hereby referred to as the perception about the persistence of socio-economic indicators. Socioeconomic indicators include but are not limited to health, safety, welfare, education, training, affordable housing, stakeholders' participation, local community security and wellbeing, positive image and physical appearance of the local environment, value for money, return on investment, employment, local area economic growth, and growth for local enterprises (Akotia, 2014; Massaro et al ., 2020).

In 2013, the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative was introduced by China as a new age socioeconomic collaboration for geographically connected regional countries, and beyond regional countries. OBOR consists of economic corridors between 65 countries all around the globe. Importantly, there exist six economic corridors in OBOR member countries and CPEC is one among them. (Xin et al ., 2020). The Economic Corridors are considered as one of the ways forward for socioeconomic sustainability of the regions (Farooq & Khawaja, 2019; Vakili et al., 2020). CPEC is helpful both for China as well as Pakistan in different areas like economic growth, entrepreneurial growth, and infrastructure development.

Through CPEC, Chinese products will reach the Middle East and Europe in a short time period. The shipping cost and time for Chinese products will be reduced up to 50%. Pakistan has also identified various indicators to achieve socioeconomic sustainability. In Pakistan, though CPEC, various infrastructure development contracts amounting to Rs. 62 billion USD have been signed with China (Xing, 2018). Under these infrastructure development contracts, industrialization in Pakistan is at the top of the agenda. For industrialization, various other schemes like technology transfer, migrant entrepreneurship, foreign direct investment in key industrial projects are also in the hands of both countries (Xin et al., 2020). The significant contribution of CPEC in Pakistan is the establishment of 09 Special Economic Zones (SEZs). These 09 SEZs are planned to be established in such a way that the whole geographical area of Pakistan, including four provinces and tribal areas, will get maximum socioeconomic benefits. The provinces in Pakistan like Baluchistan and Northern areas, which are left behind in socioeconomic growth, are targeted to bring them at the growth level of Punjab and Sindh. To achieve these socioeconomic targets, Pakistan and China are working day and night in Gwadar Port, Baluchistan, since 2015. Land acquisition is completed for Rashakai Economic Zone, KPK in 2020. Inauguration of Allama Iqbal Industrial City in Faisalabad, Punjab has also been done in 2020 and Pakistani as well global entrepreneurs are mobilizing to this economic zone. Now, the land acquisition for China Special Economic Zone in Dhabeji is under process and to be completed in 2021 (Ullah et al., 2021; Rehman et al., 2020). To reap these socioeconomic benefits of CPEC for Pakistan, measurement of entrepreneurs is required which is provided by the present research.

3. Methods

3.1 Procedure for Participants

Systematic random sampling was used and 500 industrial entrepreneurs in Pakistan were selected for this study. Their emails were obtained from the websites of the Chamber of Commerce. This research applied a survey method for data collection. The participants filled the questionnaire voluntarily since China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a potentially hopeful project for the industrial revolution in Pakistan and every Pakistani is expecting an improvement in socioeconomic indicators due to OBOR and CPEC. This research knocked 425 responses. It was found that male respondents were 93% and females were 7%. The higher number of male respondents is due to the reason that the Pakistani social and business system is based on patriarchy (i.e., male/man dominated society) rather than a matriarchy (i.e., a female-dominated society). The major responses have been received within the age 41-50 years, with an average number of experiences >20 years. Finally, the major number of respondents were having Masters Qualification.

3.2 Procedure for Instrument Development for 'Perceived Socio-Economic Sustainability'

The present research examined 11-indicators of socioeconomic sustainability as suggested by (Akotia, 2014). These 11-indicators are 'researcher-made indicators', systematically designed because of 'research-based evidence' for socioeconomic sustainability. The 11-indicators of socio-economic sustainability as suggested by Akotia (2014) are mainly:

- Health and safety for the work force and local community/residents
- promoting education and training /apprenticeships opportunities
- promoting affordable housing
- Promoting stakeholder's participation (including local community)
- Promoting community security/wellbeing
- Promoting physical appearance / positive image of the local environment
- Promoting value for money
- Promoting profitability for investors/developer (Return on investment)
- Promoting employment opportunities
- Promoting local/area economy growth
- Promoting local community enterprises/organizations.

The authors of the present study transformed the above stated 11-indicators of socio-economic sustainability into sentences/items. This instrument for PSES was proposed as uni-dimensional scale (i.e., single factor) that measures perception of the industrial entrepreneurs involved in OBOR & CPEC initiatives in Pakistan. Sample items are "I think that health, safety, and welfare are available for workforce and residents" and "I think that value for money is promoting through effective financial measures", and so on.

For in depth understanding of the scale development process, the authors studied detailed literature e.g. (bhattacherjee, 2002; Kausar et al., 2018; Rehman et al., 2020; Saleem et al., 2019). The face and content validation sheet are the mechanisms used for the present research. In this regard, the procedure guided by well-known scholars e.g. (Aydin et al., 2014; Nicholson et al., 2006) was followed. The face validity sheet was validated by the authors of this present research. To mature the sentences for items, the authors also studied relevant literature (Talukhaba et al., 2005b; Sekaran, 2006; Xu et al., 2017).

After the face validity, the content validation was conducted. Content validation is defined as a systematic process of getting and incorporating experts' opinions about the scale to which some elements/items represent a concept (Polit & Beck, 2011). In content validation, three out of seven evaluators are sufficient for an item to be retained/modified/deleted/inserted in the item pool.

For the present, the content validation sheet was validated by 7 experts from academia, 6 experts from non-academics (i.e., top ranked Govt. officials/policy makers, bankers, chief level officers, and sector technocrats), and 3 PhD scholars. These experts linked the content validation sheet with whether each item in the PSES scale is perfect, needs rephrasing/modification, deletion of the item, merger with existing item, and need a new item. These 11-items were also validated by the said experts in terms of their need, suitability, and perfection for the construct which it supposes to represent. The construct ensures clarity in the items, and specificity to differentiate the items from each other (Agustin Perez, 2012; Neff, 2003). In light of the experts' opinion, the authors finalized the sentences for the 11-item scale of PSES.

After face and content validation, the 11-item scale for PSES was forwarded to the 500 industrial entrepreneurs for primary data collection. All the responses were marked on a Likert scale between 1 to 7 and response options were set from 1-strongly disagree- to 7-strongly agree. The authors received 425 responses which were used for dimension reduction/EFA tests.

3.3 Procedure of statistical tests

For statistical analysis, a test named as 'reliability analyses' was run in SPSS 22. This test is used either as an item to be retained or rejected. A correlation between the items was used to decide about the deletion or retaining the item. A minimum and maximum range of 0.40-0.90 of correlation among the items was set to retain an item (Jones et al., 2008).

This research applied the dimension reduction method at statistically validation phase for PSES instrument development (Xu & Rahman, 2004). This research used SPSS 22 for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Under EFA, the authors applied different tests like correlation matrix, KMO and Bartlett's Test, Anti-Image matrix, communalities, total variance extracted, and component matrix/rotated component matrix. These tests are applied to check the discriminant, convergent and construct validity of the scale (Gorsuch, 1997). These tests also address instrument reliability & validity on the grounds that how many factors exist under the construct; how many items exist under each factor; which item is statistically proof to retain or delete. This research applied the principal component test with varimax testing technique for factor analysis as all items are related to uni-dimensional construct (Horel, 1984). We set eigen value as 1 (Wielandt, 1955). A factor loading to retain each item was set > 0.3 (Park & Yun, 1986).

4. Results

As the first step in instrument-development process, data screening was performed to check missing data analysis. No missing data was found because authors marked it mandatory to respond against each question at the time of online submission of the questionnaire. Before factor analysis, test named “KMO and Bartlett’s test” for sampling adequacy was conducted. Table 01 below shows the results of KMO and Bartlett’s test

Table 1
KMO and Bartlett’s Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test Sphericity		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.959
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3036.619
	Df	55
	Sig.	.000

The sampling adequacy is found 0.94 (p = .000) representing the adequacy of the sample. The sample adequacy further represented that the items are related with the construct to run an EFA (Dahal, 2007). Principal component analysis was used to extract the factors (if any) as this technique is helpful to examine the shared variance in a set of measurements through a small set of latent variables (Kulcsár, 2010; Qurat-ul-Ann et al., 2015). The authors used varimax rotation technique with principal component because PSES is uni-dimensional construct and items related with each other for the main construct.

Using principal component and varimax rotation, the authors extracted one factor (i.e., PSES) consisting of 11items. Given hereunder are the eigenvalues that show the items in terms of percentage to explain the factors. It shows that the first item explained the factor 61.8% and other ten items explained 39.2%. Table 02 below shows the results of total variance explained by each item.

Table 2
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
PSES	6.807	61.881	61.881	6.807	61.881	61.881
PSES	.656	5.964	67.846			
PSES	.617	5.611	73.456			
PSES	.539	4.898	78.354			
PSES5	.442	4.020	82.375			
PSES6	.374	3.401	85.776			
PSES7	.363	3.298	89.074			
PSES8	.333	3.030	92.104			
PSES9	.303	2.753	94.856			
PSES10	.296	2.694	97.550			
PSES11	.269	2.450	100.000			

The correlation between the items was found between 0.4 and 0.9. No item was deleted based on high or low correlation. Table 03 below shows the correlation among the items and all the correlations were found at $p = .000$.

Table 3
Correlation Table

PSES 1	PSES 2	PSES 3	PSES 4	PSES 5	PSES 6	PSES 7	PSES 8	PSES 9	PSES10	PSES11
1.000										
.713	1.000									
.684	.714	1.000								
.630	.618	.637	1.000							
.628	.644	.668	.626	1.000						
.631	.665	.658	.613	.672	1.000					
.562	.546	.574	.606	.535	.475	1.000				
.510	.529	.533	.544	.531	.564	.565	1.000			
.604	.611	.628	.598	.625	.640	.514	.517	1.000		
.539	.546	.579	.516	.615	.601	.463	.535	.620	1.000	
.556	.549	.538	.461	.539	.516	.477	.480	.521	.563	1.000

This research applied communalities test to analyze variance in each component/ item of the construct. Communality test indicated the variance in each item of the construct. The value of communalities indicates a sum of the squared item loadings up to the number of items extracted during factor analysis. While using principal component extraction methods for factor extraction as well as determining the components of the factors, the initial value of communalities always equals to 1.0 which assumes its initial correlation with the other items. But extracted value of communalities is acceptable > 0.3 for each item. Given hereunder is a table of communalities which shows that values of 11-item scale for PSES are >0.3 and ranged between 0.506 to 0.703. The values of communalities are dissimilar to each other which further indicated that each component/item is explaining the main construct differently from the other components. Table 04 below shows the extracted values of commonalities:

Table 4
Communalities

Component / item	**Initial value**	**Extracted value**
PSES1	1.000	.672
PSES2	1.000	.689
PSES3	1.000	.703
PSES4	1.000	.630
PSES5	1.000	.677
PSES6	1.000	.668
PSES7	1.000	.527
PSES8	1.000	.524
PSES9	1.000	.636
PSES10	1.000	.576
PSES11	1.000	.506

Values of cross loading of the items indicates the chances of discriminant validity of the components. Discriminant validity indicates that concepts are unrelated with the other concepts which are not supposed to be related. It states that components are uncorrelated between difference concepts/factors. The discriminant validity means that an item(s) under one factor is also explaining the other factor. The acceptable value for cross loading is <0.3. The Instrument-development and validation for PSES is a uni-dimensional construct and we have not found any chances of discriminant validity among the items. Table 05 below shows the factor loading in a way that all 11-item exist under a single factor i.e., PSES. The 11-indicators for socioeconomic sustainability as suggested by well-known scholars e.g. (Akotia, 2014) have also been statistically validated by this research.

Table 5
Component Matrix

Component / Item	**Factor Loading**
I think that…..	
Health, safety, and welfare are available for work force and local residents (PSES1)	.820
Education and training opportunities are available to all (PSES2)	.830
Affordable housing are available to all (PSES3)	.839
Stakeholder's participation is promoting (PSES4)	.794
Community security and wellbeing is promoting (PSES5)	.823
Physical appearance / positive image of local environment is promoting (PSES6)	.818
Value for money is promoting through effective financial measures (PSES7)	.726
Investors rate of return (ROI) is higher (PSES8)	.724
Employment opportunities is promoting (PSES9)	.797
Local area economy growth is promoting (PSES10)	.759
Local community enterprises/organizations are promoting (PSES11)	.711

Descriptive statistics of the items show an acceptable threshold. The mean of the items shows that most of the respondents marked for agree and strongly agree whereas the standard deviation of the items was also found positive and near to 1. To finalize the instrument development for PSES, the authors performed reliability tests. The value of Cronbach's alpha was found 0.938 (acceptable >0.7). Table 06 below shows the reliability statistics of the PSES scale:

Table 6
Reliability Statistics

Cross Processing Summary				**Reliability Statistics**	
		N	**%**	**Cronbach's α**	**N of items**
Cases	Valid	425	100	0.938	11
	Excluded	0	0		
	Total	425	100		

5. Discussion

5.1 Major Findings

The above stated statistical results indicated that the Perceived Socio-Economic sustainability scale has 11-items, and it is uni-dimensional construct for industrial entrepreneurship and economic corridors perspective. The results of this study have confirmed the statistical process suggested by (Agustin Perez, 2012; Neff, 2003). The scale developed by this study for perceived socioeconomic sustainability consists of the following 11-items:

1. I think that health, safety, and welfare are available for workforce and residents.
2. I think that education and training opportunities are available to all.
3. I think that affordable housing is available to all.
4. I think that stakeholder's participation is promoting.
5. I think that community security and wellbeing is promoting.
6. I think that physical appearance / positive image of local environment is promoting.
7. I think that value for money is promoting through effective financial measures.
8. I think that investors rate of return (ROI) is higher.
9. I think that employment opportunities is promoting.
10. I think that local area economy growth is promoting.
11. I think that local community enterprises/organizations are promoting.

5.2 Implications

Scale development provides a basic understanding for operationalizing the concepts into variables and variables into factors. This study contributes to the literature and is helpful for the researchers, policy makers, and Government functionaries in so many ways. First, this instrument-development for PSES is helpful for the researchers in the field of entrepreneurship, economic corridors and socioeconomic sustainability as this study provides a valid and reliable scale to measure the perception of different stakeholders of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Secondly, this is helpful in measuring the perceptions of specific characters in the society- whether their perception is positive toward the society or negative.

Thirdly, through this study, the scholars of behavioral sciences will be able to suggest a way forward to convert the negative perception into a positive perception. Fourthly, this study is also helpful for the policy makers and Governments by providing them with a mechanism to measure the positive or negative perception of the entrepreneurs for collaboration in economic corridors. These collaborations and positive perceptions of the entrepreneurs are the ingredients for the entrepreneurs to take the decision of new startups in economic corridors.

Fifthly, the policy makers, as well as the Government functionaries, are able through this study to analyze that country level positive perception for investment and startups is possible by providing health, safety, welfare, education, training, affordable housing, stakeholders participation, security, wellbeing, physical appearance, positive image of the local environment, value for money, rate of return, employment opportunities, local areas economy growth, and local enterprises growth. Sixthly and finally, the policy makers can analyze the 'extent/tendency' of negative perception (if any) for engagement of different stakeholders in Government sector mega projects.

5.3 Limitations of the study and future research direction

This research employed all efforts to operationalize 'Perceived Socioeconomic Sustainability for Pakistani industrial entrepreneurs in the context of economic corridors. This research has few limitations which may be addressed in future research. First, this research was designed for Pakistani industrial entrepreneurs and future research may consider the multinational or global aspects i.e., foreign partners countries, religious partner countries, region to region compression, initiatives of united nations for 17-SDGs and so on for operationalizing the scale for perceived socioeconomic sustainability. Secondly, this research was designed for industrial entrepreneurs whereas other components of the entrepreneur's ecosystem i.e., traders, marketers, service providers and Government Organizations were ignored. It is, therefore, recommended that future research may be conducted by considering other stakeholders of entrepreneurs' ecosystem to measure the perception of bankers & financial institutions, supply chain organizations, and labor unions etc.

Thirdly, this research was conducted at the start of the second phase of CPEC in which the development of infrastructure and special economic zones are under process. It is recommended that perception of the entrepreneurs may also be measured at post-development stage of infrastructure and SEZs. This research recommended testing scale for perceived socioeconomic sustainability across country level studies for more generalizability and to further authenticate the validity and reliability of this scale. This scale is recommended to be used to explore further avenues of research in entrepreneurial disciplines like entrepreneurial ecosystem, entrepreneurs trust on Govt., entrepreneurs' investment intentions and their startup behavior, and the role of transparency.

5.4 Conclusion

Considering the importance of 'perception' of different stakeholders of entrepreneurial ecosystem, this study examined the perception of industrial entrepreneurs. This study argued that to measure the perception of industrial entrepreneurs for socioeconomic sustainability, researchers need to statistically analyze it through the availability of health, safety, welfare, education, training, affordable housing, stakeholder's participation, security, wellbeing, physical appearance, positive image of local environment, value for money, rate of return, employment opportunities, local areas economy growth, and growth of local enterprises. As more similar affordable socioeconomic 11-indicators are available in the country, the perception of the industrial entrepreneurs remained positive. This positive perception leads towards a trustable relationship between entrepreneurs and Government initiatives.

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Importance of Customer Perceived Value in Restaurant Businesses: Influence of Brand Experience on Brand Strength and Electronic Word of Mouth

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to empirically examine the relationship between brand experience, brand strength, and electronic word of mouth along with mediating role of perceived brand value. A total of 308 responses were generated, using an electronic questionnaire. The data was deductively analyzed using reliability, validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling (SEM). The results of this study indicate that brand experiences positively influence brand strength and electronic word of mouth. Moreover, the results revealed the partial mediation of customer perceived value in the relationship of brand experience and brand strength and also in the relationship between brand experience and electronic word of mouth. This study explains how restaurants can create electronic word of mouth and increased brand strength through memorable experiences. This study provides insight beyond marketing mix elements, and add theatrical elements which provide evidence for positive customer value perception increased brand strength and widely generated word of mouth. The theatrical elements of serving food studied in this research have not been studied before in the context of Pakistani restaurants. Therefore, this study bridges the gap between previous studies.

Keywords*:* Brand experience, Customer perceived value, Brand strength, Electronic word-of-mouth, Pakistan.

JEL Classification: M31, M39

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1. Introduction

Stories, theater, and plays are all part of the world we live in. However, when these elements of theater and grandeur experiences are brought to traditional services and products, it makes a bold statement. From live cooking to having an ice cream made in front of you in midst of misty nitrogen clouds. From unicorn and rainbow food to lighting a chicken on fire for entertainment purposes. The restaurant industry has sufficiently surpassed the other sectors in terms of engaging and interacting with the consumer. Now, when we visit a restaurant, we see a themed ambience, in which everything from music to lights to decoration, resonates with each other. And in terms of food, restaurants today, are coming up with innovative ways to produce a buzz in consumers. Some of them offer live cooking with trained professionals cooking for them. Like in a Japanese-style steakhouse, the food is prepared tableside for the consumers all the while, the consumers can engage in conversation with him, and meanwhile, he does some entertaining acts as well (Babin & James, 2010). All these activities are done in the name of creating a memorable experience. This resonates with the fact the consumers today do not just want to have a product or service but rather they are looking for memorable experiences (Choi et al., 2018; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). These over-the-top experiences will be termed as 'theatrics' in this study. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines 'theatrics' as dramatic performances intended to attract attention(Webster). This very definition becomes the basis of this research. So, these 'theatrical experiences' fall under experiential marketing. Experiential marketing is undertaken to provide consumers with memorable experiences thus, building brand experiences (Fiore, 2010). Researchers have discussed the importance of experiential marketing (Lanier Jr & Hampton, 2016; Pine et al., 1999; Tung & Ritchie, 2011) generally as well in the context of restaurants. In fact, according to Morgan et al. (2010) theatrics have been used in the dining industry since medieval times and today as well they are utilized more in the terms of aesthetics. These brand experiences are a part of the whole interaction between the brand and the consumer. Brand experiences are the responses (either emotional, behavioral or psychological) that are generated due to unique features of a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Now, it can be said that for every individual the responses can be different as each person has different reactions to different situations. These reactions have a way of reaching the general public through word of mouth (WOM) communication. After the establishment of the worth of traditional WOM, online platforms gave rise to electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Indulging in eWOM entails that existing or potential consumers are electronically commenting (either positively or negatively) about the services, products of a brand. This form of communication is rather vital (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2003), in fact, it is considered to be more powerful than traditional marketing activities (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018) as it has the power to sway the opinion of potential customers and can have an impact on the purchase decisions of consumers. So, based on these important factors and the role of the brand experience, in the formation of positive electronic word of mouth of the customer and strengthening the brand, different brand experiences including the sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual brand experience are considered in this study. And the major objectives of this study include finding out the impacts of sensory, affective, behavior and intellectual brand experience on the electronic word of mouth of the customers and the brand strength. Moreover, as there is a very significant role of customer perceived value between brand experience, customer electronic word of mouth and brand strength, so, customer perceived value has been taken as a mediator between brand experience the electronic word of mouth and brand strength.

Positive EWOM entails that consumers develop a perception of the value of a brand. The term value has been in the literature for decades and is still considered imperative to gain a competitive advantage (Martelo Landroguez et al., 2011). The customer value perception domain discusses the give vs get debate. That is, it explains what the customer is perceiving he would get (the benefit) as opposed to what he gives (sacrifices) to obtain it. Customer perceived value (CPV) is said to be an antecedent to consumer purchase decisions that is consumers are more likely to buy a product or service that they consider of high value (Dodds & Monroe, 1985; Ebrahim, 2020). Other than creating value for consumers, brands pay particular attention to increase their brand strength. Brand strength is the set of associations and preferences that the consumer has for a brand(Shocker et al., 1994). These associations create a sense of loyalty for the brand that translates into repurchase behavior and recommendation intentions. Without measuring how the brand is performing with the consumer, it would be hard for any brand to pave the path there are on. Thus, this study attempts to link all the above-stated variables in the context of Pakistani restaurants. This sector has its benefits in the economy as people have a basic need of having food and most of them now want to eat out. People going to restaurants not only have the urge to eat and have tasty food but rather they are derived by their urges to have a wonderful experience and to socialize with others (Ibrahimi & Mansouri, 2013).

This study is significantly focusing on different brand experiences that are all important in the formation of positive electronic word of mouth and enhancement of the brand strength positively, these dimensions and factors also significantly contribute to the enhancement of positive customer perceived value by the brand. So, the study will be theoretically significant for enhancing data and knowledge regarding different brand experience dimensions when it comes to the enhancement of the customer perceived value, brand strength and positive electronic word of mouth. The analysis and results of the study are also significant and usable by the brands that strive for enhancing customer perceived value and positive brand strength. Moreover, socially and electronically weak brands can also inspire from the results of this study to improve the sensory, affective, behavioral and intellectual brand experiences for the customers, to enhance the positive word of mouth by the customers. Wiedmann et al. (2018) Conducted a similar study in which he studied multi-sensory brand experiences in the context of luxury truism and found out positive relation between experiences and brand strength. In his study, however, eWOM generation was not covered and remained a gap. In a study by Pham et al. (2016), it was concluded that customers perceived value matters in developing loyalty in restaurants, however, they suggested that restaurants need to create certain characteristics, like the taste, attitude, and quality, to attract customers and build an image and this was lacking in their study (Ebrahim, 2020). Since the studies in the past were insufficient to link brand experience, CPV, eWOM, and brand strength, this research is conducted to demonstrate the interplay of these dimensions. Furthermore, researchers in the past have not worked on the concept of theatrics and are rather a novel concept. Since the inception of social media sites, this form of experience blew all over the world as well in Pakistan. But no one has discussed the importance of providing these theatrical experiences and whether they drive the consumer to post about it. Moreover, research is needed in this context to gain an insight into the value perception of consumers in the context of restaurants; and how restaurants can create brand strength. Thus, this study aims to provide an insight into theatrical experiences happening in Pakistani restaurants. Moreover, this study attempts to understand the power of brand experiences, and how they can generate brand strength and e-WOM.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Consumers these days want to indulge in experiences creating lifelong memories. The result of a study concluded that consumers build mental associations with the brand in their minds to give it meaning (Joyce, 1963; Keller, 1993). In this same study, it was revealed that positive or negative perceptions and associations with a consumer can build lasting customer equity, hence increasing brand strength (Joyce, 1963; Keller, 1993). This theory is the base of the current study and adds e-WOM to expand it further. However, this theory presented only marketing mix elements as a basis of creating a mental association with consumers and lacks the newly found theatrical elements. These over-the-top gestures are crucial for creating a buzz in the market through electronic Word of Mouth. Which is also the focus of the parent theory. Therefore, this study attempts to enhance the theory in today's digital context.

2.1 Experience marketing strategy theory

The experience marketing theory focuses on the capitalization of the brands on the electronic word of mouth for creating experiences that induce positive outcomes and word of mouth for the brand through the brand users (Qiao et al., 2019). With the enhancement of social media usage, this theory has become more relevant in the practice, and it is now being more relevantly applied for the enhancement of positive and significant brand experience for the customers and the potential consumers of the brand. It has been observed by different researchers that people significantly use Facebook, Snap chat, Twitter and above all Instagram to share their experiences with different brands, which significantly and directly implies that electronic word of mouth is very important for creating positive and significant brand experiences, and brand experiences in return impact the electronic word of mouth positively and significantly, that enhances the strength of the brand (Diana-Gabriela, 2015). Creation of the experiences that makes the customers or the consumers of the brand loyal to the brand results in strengthening of the brand with respect to its customer base and also play a significant role in the attraction of new customers towards the brand. Moreover, this also significantly and positively enhances the positive word of mouth of the brand, which is now travelling even faster with the help of the emergence and enhancement of the electronic word of mouth of the consumers (You et al., 2015).

According to the study of (Mihardjo et al., 2019), consumers are now vigilant in sharing the opinions and information regarding brand experiences directly on social media platforms, these opinions and experiences are observed to be directly and significantly drive the buyers towards or away from the brand, its services, or its products. Brand endorsements by celebrities are observed to be enhancing sales for different brands enormously and at the same time, bad reviews and bad brand experiences are analyzed to be playing a significant role in decreasing the sales and reputation of the companies negatively in a rapid way (Al-mohaimmeed, 2020). On the other hand, consumers are analyzed to be performing their full homework as well, in the form of doing proper market research before purchasing any product or service from a specific brand and consumers are looking for information related to any product or service before availing it. These factors also point towards the importance of electronic word of mouth and brand experience, both of these concepts are significantly focused by the experience marketing strategy, which focuses on creating positively significant brand experiences for the customers so that customers can be made loyal while attracting the potential customers as well (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009).

2.2 Brand Experience and Brand Strength

Brand experience is sought after today as a customer now wants more than just a physical product but rather a memorable brand experience (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). Memorable experiences constitute intellectual, physical, interactive, and temporal elements of the offerings that engage the consumers. The experiences should be well combined to instigate the pleasure of membership, which is a requirement for brand loyalty (Fiore, 2010). It has been derived from the literature that brand loyalty, brand value, and brand equity or customer-based brand equity is synonymous with the word "brand strength" as they all, roughly, mean the associations of the consumer with the brand (Erdem & Swait, 1998; Feldwick, 1996; Wood, 2000). Experiential marketing is thus, used to engage the consumers emotionally to develop their loyalty with the consumers (Carù & Cova, 2008). Similarly, different authors have claimed that positive brand experiences are the key to creating brand strength (Brakus et al., 2009; Fiore, 2010; Verhoef et al., 2009). Experiences, generate memories and are often linked with customer satisfaction, thereby they act as an antecedent to create brand loyalty, i.e. brand strength (Chen & Lee, 2009; Pratminingsih et al., 2018). According to the theory of experience marketing, it is clear that whenever the customer is trying to have a good bond with the brand he likes, he will experience the brand again and again and if the customer finds the desired value in the brand then he will make sure the positive word of mouth on the different platforms of the social media (Adel et al., 2020). This will enhance the brand strength as well because the brand experiences must be appropriate for achieving better brand strengths (Chylinski et al., 2020). Unique and memorable experiences provide superior value to consumers and form a base of repurchase intentions and consumer strength especially in the hospitality industry (Cetin & Dincer, 2014; Pine et al., 1999). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Biedenbach and Marell (2010) it was concluded that brand experience has a relation with every dimension of brand equity, that is, brand associations, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Moreover, it is said that unique experiences can be utilized by managers to create strong brands (Mukerjee, 2018), (Punjaisri et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2020). However, in another study by Shamim and Mohsin (2013) it was identified that customer experiences have a week direct effect on brand experiences whereas brand credibility strengthens the relationship between the two variables. There is strong implication of the brand experience strategy over here, as it focuses on the capitalization of the brands on the electronic word of mouth for the purpose of creation of experiences that induce positive outcomes and word of mouth for the brand through the brand users. This strategy can be applied significantly for the positive outcomes related with the brand experience of the customers, positively and significantly impacting the strength of the brand as well. Nevertheless, studying the extensive literature it is proposed that:

H1: Brand experience has a significant positive impact on brand strength

2.3 Brand Experience and Electronic Word of Mouth

EWOM communication is considered influential when making any purchase decision, especially in the services and hospitality industry because intangible products are difficult to evaluate (Litvin et al., 2008). Experience dimensions like, physical environment, and social interaction is said to influence brand strength as well as recommendations behavior(Cetin & Dincer, 2014). When brands are engaging and use experiential marketing they increase the intentions of WOM communications (Zhang et al., 2017). When firms generate positive emotions in consumers by creating a memorable experience they generate WOM intentions (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). In the hospitality industry experiences of consumers drive them to revisit a restaurant or a hotel and then recommend it to others as well (Walls et al., 2011). Customer satisfaction has been previously linked with eWOM generation, however, in today's context this is not considered sufficient; consumers want a special experience only then they can be perused to write positive comments using online platforms, thus increasing the likelihood of positive eWOM generation. Various studies consider brand experience as the antecedent of word-of-mouth generation (Barnes et al., 2014; Beckman et al., 2013). In another study by Khan and Fatma (2017) it was established that brand experience is a stronger predictor of WOM than customer satisfaction. Consumers learn from their experiences, therefore, when they have a positive experience with a restaurant they are more likely to talk about and write positive reviews whereas, negative reviews will lead consumers to avoid such restaurants (Voight, 2007).

The experience marketing strategy enables the users of the products to make their reviews or provide feedback about the product after using the products, so the positive brand experience can be revealed by the consumers if they find what they were looking for and what they were actually wanted by the brand (Gao, 2018). If the brand is successful in giving a unique experience, then the positive electronic word of mouth is easy to capture by the consumers of the brands. So, this theory is significantly implicating in the brand experience and E-WOM (Kerguignas, 2020). Mukerjee (2018) Also deduced results from his study that brand experience has a significant impact on WOM recommendations. Consumers prefer a long term relationship with the brands, and for this reason, a brand that engages consumers in interactive experiences makes the consumers grateful and develop trust, in turn, grateful consumers write positive reviews and engage in positive eWOM (D. Raggio et al., 2014).Fou (2008) however, criticized marketers that try to influence eWOM instead he recommends that eWOM is something that happens naturally and restaurants should be encouraged to provide such services that create memorable experiences and that can be stored in consumer's memories which, they will automatically write about on social media sites. The basic definition of eWOM entails the fact that present, former or potential consumers write about their positive, negative, or neutral experiences regarding products, services, firms or brands, via the internet that is available to a large sum of people (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). The experience marketing strategy also focuses on the enhancement of brand experience by the customers positively with the help of positive word of mouth regarding the brand. According to the studies of Zhang et al. (2017), (Punjaisri et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2020) there is a significant and positive relationship between positive electronic word of mouth and positive brand experience of the customers. Moreover, various studies have also implicated the experience marketing strategy for the establishment of a positive and significant relationship between positive electronic word of mouth and positive brand experience of the customers. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Brand experience has a significant positive impact on electronic word of mouth

2.4 Brand Experience and Customer Perceived Value

Experiences are stored in consumer memories, and therefore have the power to generate certain behavioral outcomes (Brakus et al., 2009; Holbrook, 2006; Nysveen et al., 2013) thus, Brand experiences are important to create value for the consumer (Wiedmann et al., 2018) as they satisfy the demand of consumers to indulge in pleasurable experiences. Brand experiences that involve emotional stimulation can lead to increased customer perceived value and affect consumer decision-making and behavior(Wiedmann et al., 2013).

Experiences created by firms leave strong imprints and distinguish the brand from its competitors thus resulting in a unique value that in turn drives, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and recommendation behaviors (Cetin & Dincer, 2014; Pine et al., 1999). Experiences are exceptional and personal and they include perceptions of consumers and have the ability to emotionally engage the consumer, thus just like products or services, experiences also influence customers' value perception (Walls et al., 2011). CPV is strongly related to the self-identity of the consumers, therefore, individual value perceptions are generated from customers' own positive and pleasurable experiences (Holbrook, 2006). Experience marketing strategy is proved out to be beneficial for the service sector as well, as it gives the ideas to the scholars and public that good experience can significantly enhance the customer perceived value and brand experience as well as they both are linked with each other (Komiya & Nakamura, 2019) (Li et al., 2021). In a service-based economy, especially, it is vital to note that experiences are the source of competitive advantage, and such distinct intangible assets are a major hub for creating superior value perception for consumers(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) as well, intangible assets are gaining popularity and activities are directed for the co-creation of value, they further state that the world is moving from tangible assets and moving into the realm of intangibility i.e. towards resources that create effects. It is a defined fact that positive brand experience can result in positive perceived value by the customers, which again signifies towards the experience marketing strategy that involves significant focus on providing the customers with value loaded and positive experiences, for strengthening the brand and maximizing the value of the brand experience. The theory imposes that significantly positive brand experiences result in enhanced positive experiences by the customers, resulting in positive and significantly perceived value by the customers. Thus, it is deduced from the literature that:

H3: Brand experience has a significant positive impact on customer perceived value.

2.5 Customer Perceived Value and Brand Strength

It has been established in the literature that CPV is a key driver of customer loyalty (Yang & Peterson, 2004). Customers are prone to commit to an organization if they perceive, that they are getting superior value from the brand (McKee et al., 2006). Customer perceived value aids in distinguishing a brand from its competitors and develops superior brand strength, in a study, it was noted that brands should create unique value to influence brand loyalty (brand strength) (Wiedmann et al., 2018) . Moreover, CPV is not only essential in repurchase stages, when customers are trying to buy a product or service, rather perceived value is also important in the post-purchase stage, impacting consumer's loyalty behaviors (Dodds & Monroe, 1985; Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000; Petrick, 2002). It is also proposed that CPV is the foundation of true customer loyalty and that brand strength stems from CPV (Chiou, 2004; Zauner et al., 2015). With respect to the theory of experience marketing strategy, it is feasible that the positive experience of the consumer after using the product can cause benefits to the brand equity and it can also be proved beneficial for the attraction of a larger customer base because the good experiences of the people in online shopping and other types of buying and selling have caused significant impacts on the Customer value and brand strengths (Liu & Sun, 2020) (Zhang & Xu, 2018). The conception and conservation of superior CPV are intensely related to loyalty, satisfaction, and trust of consumers (Bakanauskas & Jakutis, 2010) "the translation of the customers' value perception into a holistic experience of innovative design, precious materials, excellent workmanship, and exceptional service significantly enhance brand perception and brand-related behavior" (Wiedmann et al., 2018). These thus, developed brand associations and awareness of consumers demonstrates as brand strength. On the other hand, brand loyalty has an effect on the perceived value as well (Pham et al., 2016). This means both the variables have an interchangeable relation and have an impact on each other. Brand experiences, customer perceived value and brand strength are all interrelated factors that impact each other, slight positive variance in one factor can cause significant positive variance in the other factor. It is imposed by the experience marketing strategies that brands must provide the customers with positively significant value-added experiences, that will result in positive electronic word of mouth by the customers, regarding the perceived value by the customers. Positive and significant customer perceived value does not only make the customers loyal and improves the image of the brand but also significantly and positively impacts the brand strength. The brand strength is enhanced with the enhancement of the number of loyal customers and attached advocates of the brand, as a result of positive and significant customer perceived value. Thus, it is proposed that:

H4: Customer perceived value has a significant positive impact on brand strength.

2.6 Customer Perceived Value and Electronic Word of Mouth

Strong value creation by the brands can result in enhanced word-of-mouth campaigns (Oluwafemi & Dastane, 2016). According to Babin and James (2010) it was proposed that customer service value influences the intention to spread positive WOM. CPV is composed of giving and get values, and as the price is said to be the give component it is said that CPV influences intention to spread WOM (De Matos & Rossi, 2008). In emerging marketing perceived value plays a vital role in developing positive WOM intentions (Mukerjee, 2018). Perceived value leads to purchase intention as well as generation of eWOM (Kamtarin, 2012). Moreover, according to the theory of experience marketing, it is definite that the positive word of mouth can be enhanced through the deliverance of good value by the brands as the good experience of the customer about the brand is a key to maintain the positive word of mouth about the brand (Ma & Zhao, 2019). In the case of restaurants, customers like to compare their perceived dining experiences with actual dining experiences (Longart, 2010). These comparisons can place via the use of the internet, by reading reviews, feedbacks, and blogging sites. According to another perspective, word-of-mouth campaigns affect the perceived value of dining experiences (Oluwafemi & Dastane, 2016). Thereby making the relation interchangeable. Both the constructs affect each other. There is a significant role of customer perceived value in the formation of the electronic word of mouth or the word of mouth of the customers regarding a brand, and customer perceived value is significantly impacted by the brand experience. Experience marketing strategy imposes that customer brand experiences will result in positive word of mouth and positive and significant perceived value by the customers, only if the brand experiences positively impact the opinion of the customers. That is why the theory focuses on providing the customers with positive and significant brand experiences resulting in positive word of mouth and customer perceived value, enhancing the image of the brand positively and also significantly and positively enhancing the strength of the brand. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Customer perceived value has a significant positive impact on word of mouth.

2.7 Mediation Effect of Customer Perceived Value

With relevance to the proposed theory of experience marketing strategy, which implies that the customers must contain the positive and good experience about the brand and values offered by the product, the scholars have proposed that only this way the customers can recommend the product or brand to further individuals and in this way the customer base of the company can be enhanced (İpek, 2020). Moreover, it is also clear that better brand experiences have led towards the better customer perceived value, as it gives the paths to remain on the unique line and on the way to provide the products with a better experience and better value to the customers (Deng et al., 2020). The factors of brand experience, brand strength, customer perceived value and word of mouth are varied in different ways, providing the brand with its desired outcomes and significant results, however, as it is imposed by the experience marketing theory that, there is a significant need of providing the customers with positive and significant brand experience, so it brings down the accumulative brand efforts to the brand experience of the customers. Since the relationship between CPV and brand experience; CPV and brand strength as well the relations of CPV with eWOM is established through an extensive review of the literature it is proposed that:

H6: Customer perceived value mediates the relationship between brand experience and brand strength.

H7: Customer perceived value mediates the relationship between brand experience and word of mouth.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

A review of the literature yielded many studies that cater to the variables under study. However, there was no study that could identify the effect of relationships between all the variables. Therefore, a conceptual model is proposed.

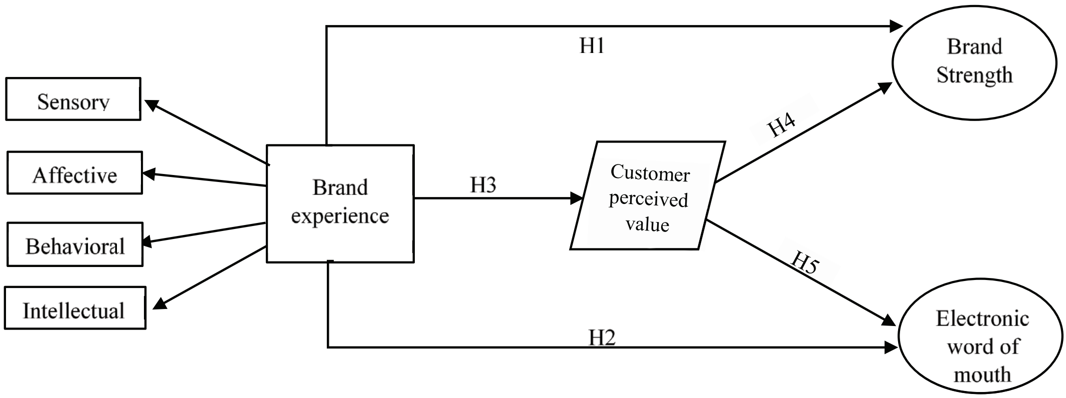

Figure1: Research Model

3. Methodology

This empirical study is based on experiences formed in Pakistani restaurants, which have not been previously studied. This study revolves around customer experiences related to certain restaurants and requires only the data for a specific point of time, as the trends keep evolving and experiences change so there is no need to conduct before and after analysis of their experiences. For this reason, this study is cross-sectional in nature. The sample size has members of both genders having different age groups that range from 15 to 60. As well, a sample of various educational backgrounds is considered. The characteristics of the sample are decided based on the population. As people in Pakistan tend to have family and friends gathering in restaurants where they undergo various experiences. These people belong to different ages, groups, genders, and educational backgrounds

The sampling technique used is convenience sampling because limited time was given to undertake the study. The sample size is calculated by using the formula given by Kline (2014). According to this formula, the items of the questionnaire are multiplied by 10. As, the total items in the questionnaire are 340, thus according to the formula 340 *10= 340, which means the sample size is 340. However, a total of 308 responses were received which are still deemed enough to provide conclusive results. This research utilized structured questionnaires that are filled by respondents over the internet, using various social media sites; like, Instagram, Facebook, and Whatsapp.

3.1 Research Instrument and Measures

The questionnaire consists of a total of 34 items. 3 items are related to the demographics of the respondent. A question is asked related to the experience of respondents with the 'viral foods' to know if they had any memorable experience. This question is important in terms of linking all the variables as well as justifying those theatrics that exists in restaurants and respondents who are aware of them. 12 items related to brand experience the scale for this adapted from (Brakus et al., 2009). 8 items are asked for the mediator, CVP, its scale is adapted from Wiedmann et al. (2018) study. Particularly the question from their CVP dimensions are taken, as these were the only related to the definition and concept of CVP utilized in this research. Brand strength is measured with 5 items, by adapting the scale of Wiedmann et al. (2018). The scale for eWOM is adapted from (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018) and includes 5 items. SPSS 20 is used to conduct different screening tests including reliability analysis and Cronbach's alpha. Apart from this software, AMOS is used for testing the mediation effects of CPV and for conducting SEM and path analysis.

4. Analysis and Results

A descriptive analysis using IBM SPSS was run to know about the frequencies and percentages of each category of demographics for the respondents. Table 1 shows the respective percentages of the respondents.

Table 1
Respondent's demographics

Demographics	***%***
Gender	
Male	28.9
Female	71.1
Total	100.0
Age	
15-20	10.1
21-30	77.3
31-40	5.5
41-50	5.2
51-60	1.9
Total	100.0
Education	
less than intermediate	1.0
Intermediate	6.2
Bachelors	56.8
Masters/MPhil	34.4
PhD	1.6
Total	100.0

Another question was asked after the major demographics section, which related to specific foods experienced in the restaurants these foods were trending on Instagram at one time or another.

This question distinguished the target respondents from the non-target respondents as only those respondents were needed that had experienced those viral foods. Respondents were asked to choose from a list of options, and they could choose any number of items that they had experienced. The choice was given to know about the popularity of these foods in Pakistan's food market. The fig below shows which foods were particularly popular among the respondents.

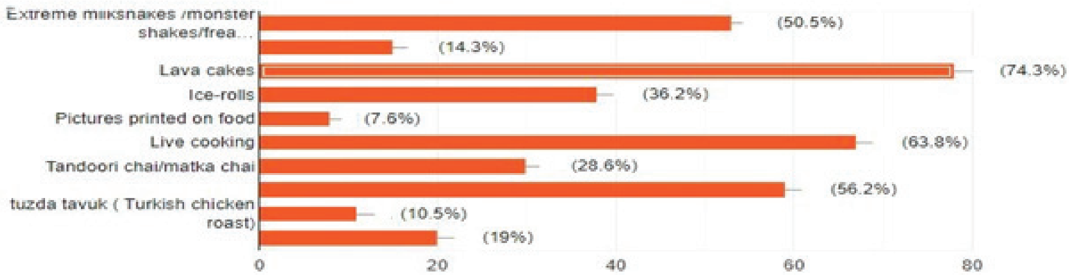

Figure 2: Foods Experienced

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is performed to check any discrepancies in the data. Table 5 presents all values related to mean, standard deviation, and skewness. As well as contains minimum and maximum values of the data. The minimum and maximum values are within the scale given that were 1-5. And the values fall between them.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
BE	1.00	4.83	3.76	.50	-1.21
CVP	1.00	5.00	3.98	.61	-1.31
BS	1.00	5.00	3.96	.59	-1.32
EWOM	1.00	5.00	3.69	.79	-1.28

Note: (BS= brand strength, BE= brand experience, CVP= customer perceived value, and eWOM= electronic word of mouth.)

The mean values for BE, CVP, BS, and eWOM are 3.76, 3.98, 3.96, and 3.69 respectively. As far as the standard deviation is concerned, it deals with the dispersion of variances along with the data set. The threshold value of this is between +1 and -1. And the values are well within this range. Standard deviation and skewness represent the normality of the data.

Skewness shows if the data is normal and bell-shaped. The negative values indicate that the data is negatively skewed meaning that the tail is on the left side, For the threshold values, -2 and +2 values can be acceptable (George & Mallery, 2016). For the current data set, the values are within the threshold values with the tail on the left side of the distribution.

4.2 Validity and Reliability

The reliability in this study is tested by computing Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Convergent validity is measured to make sure that the constructs are correlated with each other for the variable they are supposed to measure (Netemeyer et al., 2003). Convergent validity is assessed by the values of loading and average variance accepted (AVE). As for measuring the reliability of the data, the value of Cronbach's alpha, as well as composite reliabilities of the constructs, are required.

Table 3
Convergent Validity

		Reliability		**Convergent Validity**
Variables	Items	Cronbach alpha **(α)**	Composite Reliabilities **(CR)**	Average Variance Extracted **(AVE)**
BE	12	.877	0.870	0.561
CVP	8	.918	0.919	0.586
BS	5	.880	0.885	0.608
EWOM	5	.893	0.885	0.608

Note: BS= brand strength, BE= brand experience, CVP= customer perceived value, and eWOM= electronic word of mouth.

The value of Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1 and the rule of thumb is that the value should be greater than 0.7 for the data to be reliable. A value more than 0.7 is considered to be more significant and indicates the internal consistency of the data (Pallant, 2004). The test results show that the value of Cronbach's alpha for BE, CVP, BS, and eWOM is 0.877, 0.918, 0.880, and 0.893 respectively. These values specifically indicate that the data is reliable and future researchers can use the same scales to conduct their analysis. For measuring convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) is measured. AVE is a measure that explains how much variance is explained by each of the variables. For this, the threshold value given is 0.5. Values greater than 0.5 are considered satisfactory but no ideal and indicate a valid scale (Joseph et al., 2010). The values for AVE are 0.561, 0.586, 0.608, and 0.608 for the variables, BE, CVP, BS, and eWOM respectively. This means the value surpasses the threshold value of 0.5 and is considered satisfactory, indicated that convergent validity exists in the model. Thus, the scale proved to be reliable as well as valid.

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the statistical tool Amos. It is a type of measurement model that identifies the fit of the constructs under study with the latent variables. The results of the CFA are shown in table 4.

Table 4
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Model fit indices	Observed values	Criteria
CMIN	1289.3	Less is better
Df	389	-
CMIN/df	3.31	<2 = ideal, 2- 5 acceptable**
IFI	0.93	≥ 0.9*
CFI	0.93	≥ 0.9*
GFI	0.88	≥ 0.8*
RMSEA	0.074	≤ 0.08*

*(Notes: N= 308, *(joseph 2010), (kline 2011), ** (marsh))*

The value of CMIN/df is the normed chi-square, it indicates the fit of model the threshold value for this ideally is less than 3 however, and researchers also gave an upper threshold value that indicates a reasonable fit. This threshold value is between 2 and 5 (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Wheaton et al., 1977). As per these criteria, the value 3.31 is considered reasonable and the model is deemed fit. On the other hand, the criteria for both IFI and CFI signifies a value closer to 1 and accepts a range of values from 0-1 as a good fit (Joseph et al., 2010; Kline, 2011). However, the values 0.93 for IFI and 0.93 for CFI are also acceptable as well as they fall in the given range and are fairly closer to 1. GFI represents the goodness of fit and its threshold value is ideally greater than .8 but can range from 0-1, the closer the value to 1 the better the fit (Kline, 2014). The value 0.88 for GFI is fairly close to the ideal value of 0.8, thus it is considered that model contains the goodness of fit. Lastly, RMSEA stands for root mean square error of approximation and its threshold value is less than .08 and ideally it is less than 0.05 and should not be more than 0.1 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The value 0.074 from the present study can be considered significant. Thus, after analyzing all the constructs the model is deemed moderately fit.

4.4 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The final step structural equation modelling (SEM) is performed with the help of SPSS Amos 21. Table 5 below shows the casual relationships between the variables and represents their standardized regression weights shown through beta (β) values. The relation between independent variable BE and mediator CVP is shown to be significant as its significance level is less than .05 which shows that the hypothesis is accepted. Similarly, the relationship between independent variable BE and dependent variables eWOM, and BS is significant with β values .355 and .202 respectively and both the hypotheses are accepted. The relation between mediator CVP and dependent variables eWOM and BS is also accepted due to significant p- values .01 and .006 and β values .281 and .679 respectively.

Table 5
Structural Equation Model

Hypotheses	Paths	β	p-value	Result
Linear effects				
H1	BE → CVP	.648	.006	Accepted
H2	BE → eWOM	.355	.010	Accepted
H3	BE → BS	.202	.008	Accepted
H4	CVP → eWOM	.281	.012	Accepted
H5	CVP → BS	.679	.006	Accepted
Mediation				
H6	BE→ CVP→ eWOM	.36	***	Accepted
H7	BE→CVP → BS	.66	***	Accepted

*Note: BS= brand strength, BE= brand experience, CVP= customer perceived value and eWOM= electronic word of mouth. *** P < .001)*

As far as the mediation is concerned the mediator CVP does mediate the relation between BE and dependent variable eWOM. As well as mediates the relationship between independent variable BE and dependent variable BS.

The path diagram shows the casual relationship between the variables. The factor loadings show that when the independent variable BE will change 1 unit eWOM will change by 35%. Similarly, change in BE by 1 will change CVP by 65% and the change in BE by 1 unit will change BS by 20%. Likewise, change in CVP by 1 unit will change eWOM by 28% and change in CVP by 1unit will change BS by 68%. Thus SEM analysis shows that the variables significantly impact each other.

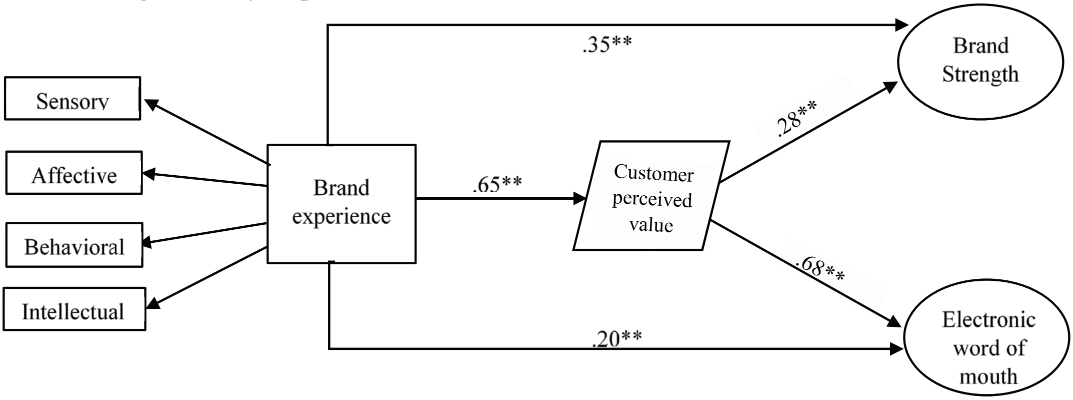

Figure 3: Path analysis

The mediation analysis is done through the path diagram. Results are obtained by computing and analyzing, direct, indirect, and total effects of the variables with each other. The mediation relationship BE→ CVP→ eWOM shows that CVP mediates the relation of BE and eWOM. Similarly, CVP also mediates the relation between BE and BS.

Table 6
Mediation

Parameter	Total		Direct		Indirect	
	BE	CVP	BE	CVP	BE	CVP
CVP	.648	.000	.648	.000	.000	.000
BS	.642	.679	.202	.679	.440	.000
eWOM	.537	.281	.355	.281	.182	.000

Total effects show the total effects that variables have on each other, including direct and indirect effects. BE has a total effect of .648 that shows with a 1-unit increase in BE, CVP will increase by 65%. The difference of total and direct effects of the variables shows that partial mediation exists in the model. Since BE indirectly impacts the dependent variable BS by .440, which means an increase in BE by 1 unit will increase BS indirectly by 44%. And the direct effect of BE on BS is .202, which means an increase in BE by 1 unit will increase BS directly by 20%. Hence, this difference shows that a mediator exists between BE and BS which is CVP. Similarly, the direct effect of BE on eWOM is .355 which means an increase in BE by 1 unit will increase eWOM by 35%. The indirect effect, however, differs from the direct one and shows that if BE is increased by 1-unit eWOM will indirectly increase by 18% again showing that a mediator is present between the two.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The present research is aimed at finding the casual interplay of variables with each other. These variables, brand experience, customer perceived value, brand strength, and electronic word of mouth have never been studied in the context of the restaurant industry before. All the results indicate positive relationships. Moreover, the study was conducted by following the gaps as suggested by (Brakus et al., 2009; Mukerjee, 2018; Wiedmann et al., 2018). This study successfully builds relationships between the variables, the findings are discussed below. The first hypothesis that deals with the independent variable B.E and dependent variable BS were not rejected indicating a significant relationship between the variables this is in line with the previous researches in which researchers concluded that experience engages customers in turn enhancing the strength of the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Carù & Cova, 2008; Feldwick, 1996). This shows that when brands engage in memorable experiences, they, in turn, develop customer-based equity and customers are more likely to revisit that place because of the associations they have built with the brand. The same concept is also described through the experience marketing strategy and theory, which proposes that customer brand experiences are very significant and positive for building up positive word of mouth for the brand and brand strength, positive brand experiences do not only make the existing customers loyal but also attract the potential customers, building up the strength of the brand (Almohaimmeed, 2020; Tynan & McKechnie, 2009). Furthermore, previous researchers also indicated that the hospitality industry specifically utilizes experiences to generate loyalty (Pine et al., 1999). The significant relationship in this study thus corresponds with the previous researches (Wiedmann et al., 2018). The second hypothesis was also significant. It shows that brand experience affects electronic word of mouth. This is, in fact in line with what previous researchers have concluded. Zhang et al. (2017) Established that experiential marketing affects word-of-mouth intentions. Experience marketing also proposes that there is a direct and significant impact of the brand experiences on the electronic word of mouth of the customers, because all of the customers are observed to be sharing their positive or negative brand experiences on social media with its significant emergence and growth. Moreover, potential customers are also assessed and analyzed to be looking for the brand product and service reviews present online on different social media applications before availing of the service or the product of a specific brand (Mihardjo et al., 2019; You et al., 2015). Moreover, Barnes et al. (2014) concluded that experience is a prerequisite of eWOM generation. This means that people that undergo memorable experiences utilize their freedom of opinion and post feedback or opinions online. This generates eWOM about the brand they are talking about (Choi et al., 2018; Ebrahim, 2020). Thus, the experience provided a reason for customers to talk about the brand in online communities which gives the brand/ restaurants an edge over the ones that do not provide unique experiences. The restaurants that give something extra be nitrogen ice cream or a pitch-black charcoal; ice cream that intrigues everyone, are more prone to generating buzz on social media sites, which automatically raises awareness about the brand. This shows that only a single viral item can create positive publicity for the restaurants. The third hypothesis also indicates a positive relationship between brand experience and customer value perception (CVP). Customers perceive a restaurant based on many aspects on f that aspect is the experience they had with the restaurant. This experience leads to a positive value perception (Yoo & Donthu, 2001) (Pine et al., 1999, Cetin & Dincer,2014). Thus, this study shows the same results as previous researches that linked value perception and brand experience but in a restaurant context. Moreover, Wiedmann et al. (2018)in his study identified that CVP is positively associated with brand experience, but in his study, he associated B.E with all the dimensions of CVP and all of them were significantly related (Ebrahim, 2020; Punjaisri et al., 2008). This also indicates that experiences are a competitive advantage that generates positive associations and value perception in the mind of consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The fourth hypothesis turned out to be significant as well. CVP impacts brand strength. Value perception has been strongly related to loyalty generation previously (McKee et al., 2006).

It has been said that superior value perception of a brand builds a superior strength as well (Wiedmann et al., 2018). This is true in the context of restaurants as well. If a customer finds a dining space more unique he would value that place and experience more this would, in turn, generate strong brand loyalty. Zauner et al. (2015) and their study presented results that indicated brand strength stems from positive customer value perception. Thus, the result of this study is also corresponding with past research. The result of this study shows that restaurants that develop superior value can generate consumer-based brand strength. The fifth hypothesis of this study showed that customer perceived value positively impacts eWOM. According to previous researches as well brand value creates positive word of mouth campaigns (Oluwafemi & Dastane, 2016). This means that value perception creates a sense of attaining superior value which in turn drives eWOM. When consumers feel they are being provided with value in a restaurant they will automatically give positive feedback and share pictures and videos online. Moreover, customers compare their perceived experiences with their actual restaurant experiences and they do it by reading online reviews (Kamtarin, 2012; Longart, 2010). Thus, this relationship is significant because it has been concluded by previous research as well. Restaurants that create value for the customer are more likely to produce positive eWOM via feedback, opinions, sharing or reviews.

In this study both the mediation, hypotheses were not rejected. However, results also indicate that partial mediation exists between the variables. This means the independent variable BE, has a relation with BS regardless of the mediator however, this relation is strengthened in the presence of the mediator CVP. The same is the case between the relationship of BE and eWOM in the presence of the mediator CVP. This means that the hypotheses proposed are significant. This illustrates that restaurants can increase their strength as well as their eWOM by providing value to consumers through delivering memorable experiences. Wiedmann et al. (2018) In their study offered similar results by linking BE. With brand strength though the mediator CVP and also concluded that value impacts their relationship. Similarly, Mukerjee (2018)conducted a study linking BE, eWOM, and value in this loyalty as the mediator, however, his study also showed positive results. Thus, value perception is essential for developing an overall dining experience.

5.2 Conclusion

Restaurants have changed dynamically in their operation and now provide experiences apart from food quality and variety. This study provides significant evidence that shows consumers are attracted to memorable experiences. Memorable experiences, in restaurants, are provided by theatrically presenting the food. Foods like lava cakes with warm oozing chocolate tempt the customers to post pictures and talk about the restaurant online. This study shows that brand experiences that occur in restaurants significantly impact the eWOM and persuade customers to post their feedback or opinions online. Moreover, this study also shows that brand experiences are related to the strength of the brand. If a restaurant is providing memorable experiences, then it is more likely to gain the loyalty of its customers. Customers have higher revisit intentions due to a memorable experience. Furthermore, this study highlights the fact that the perception of customers is important as this mediates the relationship between the variables BE and eWOM, as well as between BE and BS. It shows that consumers form certain perceptions about the restaurants which then decides what course of action they would take. These perceptions either lead to positive word of mouths being spread through social media sites or lead to a stronger customer foundation. The perceptions act as a base in the formulation of repurchase behavior that is a strength of the brand. Additionally, this study supports the notion that customers are not just after quality food rather they visit restaurants to build memories and to experience unique feelings which are made possible through extravagant presentations, lavish themes, and using non/food items to produce a theatrical effect. These in turn gain the attention of customers and spread more awareness among customers about the restaurant's elaborate dining experiences.

5.3 Research Implications

This study contributes in two main ways. It contributes to the existing literature and theory moreover it has managerial implications as well. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a model for explaining the causal relationship between brand experience, customer perceived value brand strength, and electronic word of mouth. This study contributes to the parent theory by (Joyce, 1963; Keller, 1993), as it suggested that consumers build brand image and associations by reacting to marketing mix stimuli. However, this study provides insight beyond marketing mix elements, and ad theatrical elements which provide evidence for positive customer value perception increased brand strength and widely generated word of mouth. This study fills the existing gaps by providing a framework that links all the above-stated variables in a single model. Moreover, this study provides a basis for studying theatrics in the restaurant industry which was lacking before, no study deals with the extra efforts put in presenting foods and the overall theatrical dining experience thus study forms a basis for such studies in the future. Furthermore, no studies have been conducted in Pakistan that focuses on brand experience and its dimensions this study, therefore, contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing such a study. This study is beneficial for the managers, restaurants, and food industries in many aspects. A major contribution is the fact that this study forms the basis of theatrical study in the context of restaurant managers can utilize this knowledge to provide memorable experiences to their customers. Moreover, managers and chefs can work together to devise ways that make their food unique ad existing which in turn will attract customers. Moreover, managers of food places can utilize this study in order to engage more people in electronic word of mouth. That spreads awareness about the brand and attracts more footfall. People these days get all their necessary information online for which eWOM is essential. Furthermore, this study contributes to food manufacturers in terms of gaining a positive perception of the brand and gaining more consumer strength. Managers can learn from this study and increase the loyalty and strength of their brand. By reading and applying this study, managers can gain insights into what the consumers actually want, as this study shows that customer wants more than a product or service, they want to have an "experience" and a memorable one at that which can only be provided by engaging consumers intellectually, cognitively and developing a sensory and behavioral aspect of the brand. Therefore, managers and restaurant owners should make changes in their existing menus a should introduce some items that can create a buzz in the online communities. They should grasp this opportunity to utilize modern technology to their benefit because these days, people try anything that goes viral, and for being viral restaurants should be able to create memorable experiences.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

Like every research, this study has some limitations as well. Since, resources like, time budget and other essentials are limited, it entails that study cannot be conducted on the whole population for this the sample size is constrained as well. Future researchers can take a larger sample size of responders so that results can be generalized with better precision. Since this study was only conducted on the food sector particularly in restaurants and cafes of Pakistan, Future researchers can change the sector, or the country of the study conducted. For example, they can conduct a study on the clothing sector to know what experiences in that sector drives brand strength and eWOM in consumers. The next limitation corresponds to only a few variables tested, the causal relationship of only four variables is studied here, and there could have been others that affect the relationship. Future studies can take into account individual constructs of brand experience (behavioral, intellectual, cognitive, and sensory) and study their effects on other variables. Lastly, only positive word of mouth has been studied here which is also a limitation of this study as negative word of mouth impacts consumers and their decisions. Which can be taken into account for further study. Moreover, other moderators or mediators like brand awareness and brand associations can be applied to this model to know more about the interplay of different variables and in addition to this culture and demographics can be studied to know what initiates certain behaviors in various cultural groups and different genders.

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Role of University Preparation of Students' Perceived Employability and Professional Competencies

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Abstract

The present research examines the effect of professional competencies of students on perceived employability including the relationship between perceived employability and professional competencies of postgraduates from public and private universities. The study was based on quantitative research following the positivist paradigm of the research. Furthermore, this study was carried out on a sample of 300 hundred post graduates including males (n= 150) and females (n=150) using the multistage technique. Data was gathered through a survey using the Perceived employability Scale (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007); and Gutierrez's community college student survey (Gutierrez, 2012). Statistical analysis (T.TEST, ANOVA, Pearson 'r' and regression) was formulated using SPSS and AMOS. The study revealed substantial differences between the opinions of male and female postgraduates from public and private universities. This research study also explored the positive relationship between perceived employability and the professional competencies of university postgraduates. Furthermore, results demonstrated the positive effects of professional competencies on the perceived employability of university postgraduates. Research implications suggested that universities should work for the improvement of employability skills and professional competencies so, that postgraduates may become more competent. Additionally, the proactive partnership between universities and government agencies should be strengthened to cope with the workplace challenges faced by postgraduates.

Keywords: Perceived Employability, Professional Competencies, and Postgraduates research Implications, Statistical Analysis.

JEL Classification: I20, I23

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1. Introduction

In the present age, universities are shifting their paradigms from traditional aspects of teaching and learning towards economies, building communities, and leadership patterns (Hussain & Malik, 2014). During the past decade, the internationalization of higher education and the rapid growth of students in this sector has increased the competition in the job market. Education plays a vital role in the development of human capital that subsequently brings about the establishment of harmonious communities and sound economies (Sohail & Daud, 2006). Consequently, higher education institutes are reshaping their curricula and teaching processes, furthermore, enhancing the professional competencies of their faculty as per the conditions of the job market. That is why students are eager to get admission in those institutes, which are truly responsive to these requirements (Saunders & Zuzel, 2010).

Employability is determined by properties in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitude. Furthermore, the way these assets can be assessed and organized, demonstration of these assets to managers, and the situation inside which the people work personal circumstances and labor market. Knight and Yorke (2001) reveal the conception of employability includes professional skills, subject expertise, and personal qualities. Unfortunately, sometimes people or researchers confuse the term employability with employment and entrepreneurship (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007; Yorke, 2004) simply employability means getting hired by employers, or having knowledge, set of expertise and personal attributes help an individual to decide and secure employments which let the individuals be successful and satisfied (Williams et al ., 2015).

Managers, employees & professionals agree to the point, that developed professionals are required, who should be good in knowledge, skills, and abilities, to manage the requirements of the current scenario and increased the competition according to the needs of national and international levels. Unemployment is crucial in Pakistan at all levels. Due to this high ratio of unemployment, human resources are affecting a lot, and incomes are depressed. Such economic situations also affect the family lives and emotions of these affected persons.

Ibad (2019) stated that competencies are requirements of individuals to complete required tasks, which reflect what a person knows and is capable of. Generally, competencies stand as unified and combined mechanisms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Competency consists of skills, understanding, values, attitudes, and behaviors that remain obligatory to accomplish the desired results in a certain task or activity (Morris et al., 2013). These are professional terms that covers some specific skills and knowledge for specific job positions and the generic term focuses on psychological and social abilities that influence an individual workplace behavior (Miller et al., 2012).

According to the 'employability survey 2018', 85% of employers were not satisfied with the performance of fresh graduates. Furthermore, 22% of graduates fail to get employment in any organization; this could be to the lack of employability skills (Ahmad et al., 2019). Recent research reveals that 74% of Pakistani graduates wish to join employment as a career path after completing their graduation (Samo & Mahar, 2016). But there was a significant difference found among the information skills and technical skills of graduates (Hussain & Malik, 2014). These graduates lack soft and technical skills, such as creative thinking, leadership, foreign language, and communication. Competencies are also important to assess as these are also required by employers (Hussain et al., 2010). Evidence suggested that people having good education with job-related skills have a higher level of perceived employability (Brungardt., 2011). There is a lack of knowledge that fosters the perceived employability of postgraduates (Rothwell et al., 2008). Continuous learning is linked with employability and employability depends on shift of expertise, being adaptable to workplace demands, and ability to adopt new skills other than career moves in the same organization or varied organizational context (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Even though, various studies focus on competencies and employability (Nauta et al., 2009; Scholarios et al., 2008). Universities are observed as a major source for the job market to supply well-mannered and trained workers for workstations (Bakari et al., 2017).

Graduates are the scientists, artists, leaders, thinkers, and innovators of the future. So, the competencies are essential for equipping graduates with professionalism that is necessary to successfully navigate their careers in learning, working, and living. Graduates use and develop professional competencies, whenever they encounter challenging and unfamiliar situations. Employers rely on employees to increase their competitiveness because the quality of graduate's ability and output influence the overall performance of the organization and its outcome (Pang et al., 2019).

This research will make valuable contributions, as employability has important implications and numerous potentials for multiple research streams. First, the researcher identifies an apparent theoretical gap in previous research concerning that, some of the previous theories are found to be important and a foundation admirable recognition. However, an investigation in term of perceived employability linked with professional competencies and theoretical development is necessary (Morris et al., 2013: Zahid et al., 2019) previous theoretical model need to embrace more contemporary research in perceived employability and professional competencies will provide a stronger theoretical base. Second, there is a population gap, this population segment has been under-researched in prior literature because prior research was not focusing on postgraduates and regarding the lack of skills (Saher & Hussain, 2019).

1.1 The objective of the study

The main purpose of the research is to:

1. Identify the relationship between perceived employability and professional competencies of university postgraduates.
2. Explore the effects of perceived employability on professional competencies of university postgraduates.

2. Literature review

2.1 Definitions and dimensions

Employability is often defining as the probability of getting or keeping a job, hence employability seems to be directly linked with regional and national economic conditions. Employability is referred to as a process of learning, achievement, and potentials of graduates to acquire a job. There is a need to bring employability into practice, so, graduates can develop their knowledge and skills to be productive in the job market and society (Romgens et al., 2019).

Graduates' perceptions regarding their jobs after graduation are called perceived employability. Their perception is based on their skills, field of study, university ranking, and trends and conditions of the job market (Bakari & Hunjra, 2018). The concept of employability has been stated in several contexts in literature, as per in different studies employability exploring, how individuals or graduates would enter the labor market. There are many interpretations of employability in the literature that can be reduced to the following constructs. According to the graduate, employability is obtaining a job, as per the student's point of view, employability is being developed by their experience of education (Maxwell et al., 2010). Accordingly, scholars will nurture their employability in ways and means that reproduce their situations by the optimism that they will be proficient graduates who have autonomy in their competence to describe what they are pursuing to attain, take active or proper action, carry on obtaining from practices, aware and work effectively with others, both individually and in connection with others, in a different and changing society (Tang, 2019).

2.2 Theoretical expositions

Review of employability gives multiple meanings because the theory of employability is difficult to identify. Employability is linked with several factors that contribute to this idea knight and York (2004) that employability is a multidimensional concept, all about the workplace and the capability to be hired, or the ability to preserve employment, maintain employment, and get new hiring if required. Perception of employability is changing day by day, in the past employers was more responsible for job security, training and development, career development and helps their employees in problematic situations, and employees were more dedicated to their associations (Forrier & Sels, 2003). The modern view of employability is centered on a psychological contract that develops hope in employees to uncover opportunities in a challenging environment with a more variety of skills. The present situation of the workplace creates a more destabilized employment relationship from the past because now employees are responsible to secure successful employment on their own (Finn, 2000). Employment is a necessary part and indicator of recovery for many people, conversely, they face significant barriers, notable stigma, and discrimination. Employment plays a crucial role in the lives of people it connects people to their communities, gives a structure to daily life, status, and the resources to do things they value. Paid employment is still considered to be stressful (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Scholars from higher education institutes are supposed to gain certain potential and skills, for instance, problem-solving skills and team working after experiencing their learning process of higher education (Graduate employability: employer's perception survey, 2018). Over the past decade, it is emphasized by the researchers or practitioners that, set of soft skills comprising of the abilities to solve problems, communicate effectively and collaborate in higher education institutes (Chamorro et al., 2010).

Continuous learning is linked with employability and employability depends on shift of expertise, being adaptable to workplace demands, and ability to adopt new skills other than career moves in the same organization or varied organizational context (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Even though, scholars or graduates underscore the importance of competencies and competency development (Scholarios et al., 2008) various studies focus on competencies and employability (Nauta et al., 2009). Competencies are well-known as activities carried out by employees or organizations to enhance or maintain an individual's career, education, and functional experiences (Forrier & Sels, 2003). An integrative style approach involving both organizations and individuals for developmental activities is known as competency development (Francis & Sandberg, 2000). The employability of workers is also considered important in terms of career development activities (De Vos et al., 2011). The positive association between perceived knowledge and job rotation and skill development improves the employability perceptions, as well as enhance specific knowledge domain and skills of individuals. Furthermore, it is assumed that the culture of any organization which is supportive of individuals and their development, positively affects employability orientation.

Several alternative models of employability have been developed by the researchers to obtain an understanding of graduates' employability, these models provide a clear picture of the interaction between various factors to understand employability (Harvey & Moorey, 2002; Knight & York, 2004). This research was focusing on the correlation between perceived employability, and the professional competencies of university students. There is no absolute understanding of what is meant by employability and the literature review explores this vagueness. Research considers the requirements of employers from graduates.

The review reflects the tendency of graduates' ongoing lobbying and attributes from the industry for universities to prepare graduates for the workplace.

Based on the literature review and research objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

H_{o1} Perceived employability of males will be different from female postgraduates.

H_{o2} Professional competencies of male and female postgraduates will be significantly different.

H_{o3} There will be a positive relationship between professional competencies and the perceived employability of males and females among different departments.

H_{o4} There will be a relationship between perceived employability and professional competencies of postgraduates of universities.

H_{o5} There will be a positive effect of professional competencies on the perceived employability of university postgraduates.

2.3 Method

The research is based on correlational design to address the research problem logically and explicitly. The positivist paradigm was followed in this research. The positivist paradigm facilitates quantitative researcher to employees' complex statistical data analysis technique that helps them to provide important insight regarding respective fields (Saunders et al., 2012). Quantitative research focuses on investigating the relationship among different variables of study (Saunders et al., 2012). In the present research study, the quantitative research approach enables the researcher to explore the extent to which professional competencies affect the perceived employability of postgraduates of different universities.

2.4 Sample

To assist in addressing the research objectives, a survey was conducted to explore the relationship between perceived employability and professional competencies of postgraduates in this study. University postgraduates (N= 300) were participating in this research study. A multistage proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the sample from the targeted population. In the first stage, three public and three private universities were randomly selected with the help of the HEC 5th ranking list, after selecting universities three departments (1=social sciences, 2= Hard sciences, 3= Natural sciences) were selected from each university on the second stage. In the third stage, postgraduates from each department were selected based on the proportion to participate in the present research. 25 male and 25 female postgraduates were approached, 50 from each department based on the proportion of 150 from each sector, and data were collected after their informed consent. Table 1 indicates the demographics profile of postgraduates.

Table 1
Sample demographic of postgraduates (300)

Demographics	**Characteristics**	***F***	**(%)**
Gender	Male	150	50
	Female	150	50
Age	20-25	174	58.0
	26-30	126	43.0
Sector	Public	150	50
	Private	150	50
Department	Hard sciences	100	33.3
	Social sciences	100	33.3
	Natural sciences	100	33.3

The primary data collection technique was utilized in this study. A quantitative survey was employed for data collection purposes because employing appropriate statistical techniques can help to achieve good generalizability for the sample and questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2012). The sampling technique was used to deal effectively with access to data, time, and needed resources. The researcher had adapted two instruments on perceived employability and professional competencies for data collection. After piloting, the Reliability of the instruments was calculated.

2.5 Perceived Employability

`The perceived employability scale was developed by Rothwell and Arnold (2007). The general perception of postgraduates has been captured by selected measures. The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale which ranges from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The questionnaire was based on 16 items and its internal reliability was 0.88 after being piloted by the owner. While the Cronbach's alpha value of reliability measure for the current sample was .91 for overall items, .85 for factor one, and .88 for factor two indicating good consistency and reliability of the questionnaire (Ursachi et al ., 2013).

2.6 Professional competencies

A scale based on professional competencies was developed by Gutierrez (2012). The general perception of postgraduates has been captured by selected measures. The questionnaire was not based on a five-point Likert scale. It was based on five parts including 27 items. The reliability of the instrument was 0.83 after being piloted by the author but now it was .83 which was indicating a good measure of reliability (Ursachi et al., 2013).

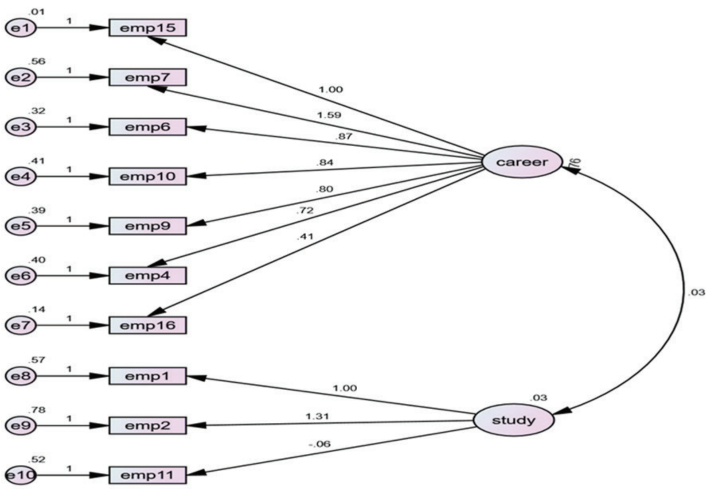
2.7 Procedure

Public and private universities were visited by the researcher to collect direct and honest responses from postgraduates. First, the research purpose was explained to respondents to simplify the queries. It was also explained to participants that the research was relevant to their studies and university preparation. A complete explanation was also provided regarding the questionnaire where needed. Additionally, it was also informed that data was collected only for academic purposes and anonymity of data would be maintained to get a good quality of responses.

2.8 Findings

For hypothesis testing, correlation and regression analysis using SPSS and Amos were applied to examine the correlational effects of professional competencies on the perceived employability of university postgraduates. 150 males and 150 females were participating in this study. 50 % of respondents were from Public sector universities and 50 % of respondents belong to private sector universities.

Figure 1: hypothesis testing correlation and regression analysis



CFA

A two-factor model is to be confirmed in the measurement portion of the model. We evaluated the assumptions of multivariate normality and linearity through SPSS 21. Using box plots, we observed no univariate and multivariate outliers. The sample size was 300, there was no missing data. The Comparative fit index (CFI)= .99, the Tucher-lewis fit index (TLI)= .99 and the RMSEA= 0.01. Those values are a good fit between the model and the observed data. Standardized parameters are provided.

Table 2
Goodness of fit indices of model

Model	**df**	**p-value**	**TLI**	**CFI**	**RMSEA**
Default model	53	.09	.99	0.99	0.01

Table 3
Perceived employability based on Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Sig.	Df
Perceived Employability	male	150	56.5000	.000	298
	female	150	60.1000	.000	280.54

There was a significant difference in scores of males (M=56.5.9, SD=8.33) and females, (M=60.2, SD= 6.46). The research hypothesis "Perceived employability of male will be different from female postgraduates" was accepted. Results show that females have more Perceived employability as compared to males. The magnitude of the differences in the means (Mean difference= -3.6000, 95% CI: -5.29 to -5.29) was high.

Table 4
Professional competencies based on Gender

	Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Sig.**	**Df**
Professional Competencies	Male	150	75.6133	.038	298
	Female	150	73.8400	.038	296.55

Statistics show that male respondents have more Professional competencies as compared to female respondents. So, the research hypothesis "Professional competencies of male and female postgraduates will be significantly different" was accepted. Because the magnitude of the differences in the means (Mean difference= 1.773, 95% CI: .094 to .094) was high.

Table 5
Two-way between-group ANOVA

Source	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	2227.287[a]	3	742.429	21.449	.000
Intercept	1191041.322	1	1191041.322	34408.847	.000
Gender	81.000	1	81.000	2.340	.127
department	1166.967	2	583.483	16.857	.000
Gender * department	.000	0	.	.	.

A two-way between-group analysis of variance was conducted to explore the effect of gender, and department on the level of perceived employability, as measured by the perceived employability scale. Table 5 shows that subjects were divided into three groups according to the department (Group 1: natural sciences; Group 2: hard sciences, Group 3: social sciences). The interaction effect between gender and departments was statistically significant, F (2,296) = 16.8, p=.000. There was statistically significant main effect for department F (2,296) = 2.34, p= .000; however, the effect size was moderate (partial eta squared = .12).

Table 6
Two-way between-group ANOVA

Gender	**Department**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**N**
Female	natural sciences	64.7400	4.32746	50
	hard sciences	59.4200	6.08139	50
	social sciences	61.0400	8.06848	50
	Total	61.7333	6.68733	150
Male	natural sciences	62.9400	5.58573	50
	hard sciences	68.1200	4.15830	50
	social sciences	65.4200	5.89393	50
	Total	65.4933	5.64587	150

Post hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for natural sciences (M = 64.7, SD = 4.32) was significantly different from the hard sciences (M = 59.4, SD = 6.0). Mean score for natural sciences (M = 64.7, SD = 4.32) was significantly different from social sciences (M = 61.0, SD = 8.06). The Research hypothesis 'There will be a positive relationship between professional competencies and the perceived employability of male and female among different departments' was accepted. All the departments were different at a significant level.

Table 7
Correlation between professional competencies and perceived employability

	Competencies Professional	**Job Opportunity**	**Importance of Studies**
Professional Competencies	1	.169**	.430**
Job Opportunities		1	.486**
Importance of Studies			1

***. P<0.01, *. P<0.05*

Table 7 indicates a meaningful relationship between perceived employability and professional competencies based on Pearson 'r' because a relationship is a measure of association between two variables (Mukaka, 2012). Preliminary analysis was performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The research hypothesis "There will be a relationship between perceived employability and professional competencies of postgraduates of universities." was accepted. Because there was a positive and significant correlation at a moderate level (Mukaka, 2012) among the professional competencies and dimensions of the Perceived employability scale. Findings revealed that professional competencies are required to improve the perceived employability of university students.

Table 8
Effects of professional competencies on perceived employability

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% CI	
						LB	UB
Professional competencies	69.717	3.681		18.940	.000	62.488	76.945
Job Opportunities	-.355	.286	-.052	-1.239	.216	-.917	.207
Importance of Studies	1.461	.135	.456	10.800	.000	1.195	1.726

***. P<0.01, *. P<0.05*

Table 8 reveals that professional competencies predict the perception of participants related to the dimensions of perceived employability in a positive way and at a significant level. Statistics revealed that the research hypothesis “There will be a positive effect of professional competencies on the perceived employability of university postgraduates” was accepted. Results show that professional competencies are required for perceived employability.

3. Discussions

The findings of research hypothesis 1 reveal that, in public and private universities of the Lahore district, male postgraduates have less perceived employability than female postgraduates. Female postgraduates were more confident about their acceptability regarding the job than male postgraduates. According to Seher and Hussain (2019) male and female students have the same sense of perceived employability. Furthermore, results indicate that there is a significant difference between the scores of males and females’ respondents based on professional competencies. Because results of hypothesis 2 declare that male postgraduates have more confidence about professional competencies for the workplace than females. Since perceived employability and professional competencies based on sectors were the same. Both sectors were providing equal quality services because there was no significant difference between perceived employability and professional competencies based on sector. Seher and Hussain (2019), concluded that private universities were providing more quality services than public sector universities. Results based on Ho3 regarding two-way analysis of variance indicated that there is a significant difference among different departments. Participants from different departments have a different sense of perceived employability. Based on mean score difference findings indicates that postgraduates from the department of hard sciences ($M = 66.7$, $SD = 5.25$) shows high score, then natural sciences ($M = 63.8$, $SD= 5.05$) and social sciences ($M = 60.6$, $SD = 7.15$). According to these results, postgraduates from the department of social sciences were least on the sense of perceived employability, and postgraduates from hard sciences were on a high score. Postgraduates with better professional competencies will have a clearer idea about how to develop themselves. Furthermore, professional competencies help individuals to explore different possibilities at the workplace and exert control over their career which later enhance perceived employability (Forrier et al., 2015) professional competencies are beneficial for the personal and career development of postgraduates because these competencies make them adaptive for workplace behavior. Moreover, after applying Pearson’s r’ results of hypothesis 4 declare that there is a strong positive correlation between perceived employability and professional competencies of postgraduates from public and private universities.

The findings of Ho4 based on dimensions of the Perceived employability scale declare meaningful and positive relationships at a moderate level. This is an indication that postgraduates who have more professional competencies are good in perceived employability and fewer competencies affect the perception of postgraduates regarding employability. So, the postgraduates need more professional competencies to enhance their performance and proficiencies. Universities should focus on professional competencies because more professional competencies will help to improve the perceived employability which is required by the employers at the workplace. Findings urge HE providers to review and consider their strategies for developing professional competencies to ensure effectiveness at the workplace and postgraduates must have access to such opportunities. Universities should be aware of their postgraduates regarding the value of such competencies and development to face challenges of the workplace. Moreover, postgraduates must have the awareness for effective career transition.

Employers are undoubtedly in continuous search of employable postgraduates who are not only ready to demonstrate employability skills but are competent in using these skills to create a positive working environment for the overall higher performance of the organization. While employees are expected to maximize their potentials to become successful in their jobs, it is essential to ensure that what they do in the organization will lead to producing positive impact (Abas & Imam, 2016). So, universities should improve their expertise to polish their fresh graduates to be an employee in any organization without any obstacles.

3.1 Practical implications

Our world in this 21st century is a picture of a revolution of rising skills. The present age requires that we must have the required matching skills level of postgraduates of universities and the perceived employability skills requirement of workplace presently and for future. So, there must be a proactive partnership between universities and government agencies which should be strengthened. Secondly, the government should provide funds and infrastructure to practice these skills within campuses. Furthermore, higher education institutes should devolve their services to enhance employability skills and professional competencies in their students to become competent before entering the workplace. Universities can motivate teachers for strengthening employability and professional competencies by putting their energies into the welfare of students. Not only that universities should improve on-campus and off-campus training, but postgraduates can also devote their energies to learn, which is important at the workplace.

4. Limitation and suggestions

Empirical research has some limitations that need to be highlighted, so future studies will expand and improve the prior research findings. A nationwide study should be conducted in the future to assess the perceived employability and professional competencies of postgraduates of universities. Because there is a need to improve the aptitude of students, it will help produce professionals with more mentoring and a sense of achievement that will positively affect their perceived employability and professional competencies.

5. Conclusion

The present study expands the stream of previous research in perceived employability and professional competencies by showing the relationship between the perceived employability of postgraduates and professional competencies. Since, professional competencies enhance the perceived employability of university students, these competencies are also helpful in their practical routine at workstations for career development. So, postgraduates can improve their perceived employability for a better career by focusing on professional competencies. Since nowadays these competencies are required by the employers.

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Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Employee Attitudes and Engagements

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Abstract

Relationship of workplace spirituality with organizational outcomes is an important aspect that needs to be studied. While recognizing that workplace spirituality is an abstract concept, this quantitative study explores the relationship between spirituality at the workplace with employee attitude and engagement. Workplace spirituality has been measured through a combination of individual and organizational type variables whereas employee attitude was measured through five prevalent variables. Two variables were used to measure employee engagement. This research proved a positive association between spirituality at the workplace and employee attitude and engagement. PLS-SEM is used to test the developed research model and hypotheses on the collected data from 250 valid respondents. In conclusion and recommendation, this paper presents several implications and opens new research directions for both academics and the business world, moreover, the paper also justifies the need for a comprehensive investigation into the impact of workplace spirituality on employees and subsequently on organizational performance.

Keywords: Spirituality at Workplace, organizational commitment, Employee engagements, Dimensions of spirituality.

JEL Classification: O43, O44

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1. Introduction

A group of people working together in a place rationally and systematically in order to achieve common goals by utilizing available resources is considered as an organization. However, since resources are limited organizational success and profitability lies in their employees being passionate and committed. Organizations are continuously looking for ways to strengthen employee's commitment (Utami et al., 2021). A few decades back, organizations wanted their employees to put their full physical efforts and were reluctant to discuss and consider the impact of spirituality at the workplace on employees due to its religious and communal implications (Jena & Pardhan, 2018). Several factors were discussed and focused by managers and organizations including job satisfaction, rewards, work environment, recognition and others that were related to organizational commitment. However, spirituality at the workplace got little or no attention in the organizational context (Devendhiran & Wesley, 2017). The twenty-first century witnessed the discussion on spirituality and its effects on the workplace, there were several books published, and several stories were covered by top magazines (Milliman et al ., 2003). The frequency of literature in the area has increased rapidly. This massive transformation in interest is solely based on the literature written which highlighted the importance of workplace spirituality in organizational structure (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). The growing body of knowledge in the area provides insights into the antecedents and consequences of spirituality, however, there is still a lot to be done to further understand and explore the concept in the organizational contexts especially in the empirical sense. There can be several arguments on why there is such an interest in the area all of a sudden. Ray (1992) provided a potential argument that in this era of information and knowledge, individuals are increasingly ambitious to experience meaningfulness in their personal and professional life sphere. In the globalized and technology-based era, the work life balance or workload increased and became time consuming for the employees. Hence, knowledgeable professionals are realizing the need for spiritual consciousness for the amalgamation of personal and professional goals (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Spirituality in a working environment includes a pursuit to find the final goal of a person's work life, creating a balance between individual and organizational cultural values (Kalantari & Khalili, 2018).

Spirituality in an organization is not focused on promoting one's ideology or ideological system but is related to create a culture that recognizes and promote the spirit of work of the employees (Devendhiran & Wesley, 2017). Such practice helps on both ends, from the employer and employee perspectives which leads to improved relationships between both, resulting in the loyalty of the employees and longer retentions. This reduces the cost of hiring and simultaneously helps in increasing performance, productivity and growth of the organization (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Employees on the other hand benefit from spirituality as it results in less job stress, higher creativity and innovativeness, increases their morale, and brings better team spirit and higher quality of work (Daniel, 2015). Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) reported that organizations that implemented programs that enhanced workplace spirituality, have seen higher employees' satisfaction and reduced turnover, which resulted in hiring cost reduction and better growth.

Prior studies in the area have highlighted the dimensions of spirituality which included alignment of values, sense of community and meaningful work and checked its impact on organizational commitments, job involvement, organizational self-esteem, intentions to quit and others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This study also aims to highlight several aspects that are related to workplace spirituality or are linked to spirituality. The core of this study is to understand the importance of workplace spirituality and its effects on organizational outcomes which were measured through employee engagement and employee attitudes. Moreover, this study measures workplace spirituality using three dimensions supported by literature and measures employee engagement using two dimensions which includes job engagement and organizational engagement. The last construct, employee attitudes was measured using five dimensions that were organizational commitment, intentions to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement and organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). The model proposed in the study constructs a relationship between workplace spirituality, employee attitude and engagement and was a higher order for all the three constructs. By doing this, all the factors are taken into consideration while reducing the hypotheses in the model.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Spirituality

Spirituality concept is quite old however the shift in definition emerged in the 11th century when it was believed that spirituality represented the mental aspect of the human being. Two centuries later spirituality represented psychological and social implications. After the Second World War spirituality definition got separated from religion and it was considered that a person can be spiritual but not religious (Broadhurst, 2021). Numerous definitions of workplace spirituality exist in literature but none has defined workplace spirituality completely. Furthermore, there is no consensus on the definitions provided by scholars, this enigma is due to the subjective nature of the construct (Gull & Doh, 2004). There is also little empirical research that has been conducted on the subject (Mccormick, 1994) furthermore the overlapping concept of spirituality and religion has created further confusion (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Spirituality covers many aspects, always difficult to explain and encircle a wide variety of experiences. The definition differs due to personal differences which leads to interpretation and expression of spirituality in many different ways (Coyle, 2002). There are several definitions and interpretations of spirituality. 'Spirituality means heaven.' 'Spirituality is continuing the spirit of life, offering me optimism and hope.' 'Spirituality for me is existence and, also a part of my rehabilitation. It is encircling trust and faith.' Pursue direction, comfort and refuge. It is an element of my life and part of my rehabilitation. It is encircling trust and faith.' In general, the definition of spirituality is "expressing our desires to find meaning and purpose in lives and is a process of living out one's set of deeply held personal values" (Lorraine, 2009; Pardasani et al., 2014).

2.2 Workplace spirituality

The aspects of workplace spirituality confess what workers acquire against spiritual workplace. Employees often attempt to acquire meaning, purpose and fulfilment at their workplace (Mitroff & Denton, 2012) because their social identity is partly formulated from their work (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). Spirituality of the workplace encompasses both organizational and individual perspectives. With reference to organizational perspective, workplace spirituality can be explained as "framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010). Moreover, the definition of workplace spirituality from an individual perspective can be expressed as the objective of finding the ultimate purpose in life, connecting with others at work and joining individual values with organizational values (Mitroff & Denton, 2012). In its broadest term, it can be defined as a measure of workers' desire to face the pressure and turbulence of modern organizational life while improving their welfare and organizational performance (Purnamasari et al., 2020)

2.3 Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Researchers have experimented in the past studies to establish scale dimensionality of workplace spirituality through different aspects. Workplace spirituality has been measured through seven dimensions, more specifically: individual private life, individual responsibility, meaningfulness at work, group spirituality, community conditions, self–reflective dimensions and positive relationship with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Milliman et al., 2003). The lack of a concrete, concise and complete definition of spirituality in general and workplace spirituality, particular, has led to subjective categorization and measurement of the concept (Pardasani et al., 2014). In our study the dimensions taken are a combination of both individual factors and organizational characteristics, thus integrating the individual level factors with organizational characteristics in order to better understand the impact of one onto another.

2.3.1 Meaningful Workplace

Workers in current time focus beyond effectiveness and efficiency and pursue purpose, fulfilment in their work and meaning (Mitroff & Denton, 2012). The investigation for the content of this phenomenon is not at all new. Employees quitting their employment in pursuance of meaning or spiritually upgrading life is a very common phenomenon these days (Burack, 1999). Meaningfulness can be defined as the value an individual attaches to the workplace or how an individual defines one's own particular beliefs, ideals, standards or norms (May et al ., 2004). Workers use their very own desires and truths in their workplace and in the completion of tasks that provides meaning and purpose to their life (Hawley, 1993). Lack of meaning and purpose of work has a negative impact on employees' performance as it leads to alienation of oneself and increased frustration (Naylor et al ., 1996).

2.3.2 Sense of Community

Another important dimension of spirituality at the workplace is a community which entails a deep connection or a relationship with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Psychologically community sometimes referred to as a sense of community, is an essential conceptualization of society's psychological values or an interconnection between its members. (Peterson et al., 2008). In distinction, the sense of community presents a framework and common language which helps members to expand their understanding and knowledge regarding the approach that would ensure growth and progress both as an individual and as a member of a group or community (Peterson et al., 2008). Sense of community as one of the dimensions of workplace spirituality deals with group interaction behaviors of human beings and more specifically the interaction that takes place between employees and other coworkers in an organization. The individual sense of community is based on the belief that people are connected with each other and that there exists some kind of relationship between the inner self of one individual with others. Such type of spirituality or sense of community involves employees' mental, emotional and spiritual connections between themselves as teams or as groups within an organization (Neal & Bennet, 2000). "Against the presence of a vast collection of literature about the sense of community, there is no all-around knowledge meaning of the term" (Rovai & Gallien, 2005).

2.3.3 Alignment of Values

Another dimension of spirituality is the alignment of values which occurs when an individual feels a strong correlation or alignment between their personnel value and the organization value, mission and purpose (Mitroff & Denton, 2012). The central conceptualization of workers possessing an intuitive organizational engagement revolves around their knowledge and alertness towards aligning their personnel values with the organizations' culture in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. It is important to note that the invisible apparels of culture are values (Henderson & Thompson, 2003). When organizations can develop a culture that effectively aligns individual and organizational values this will lead to the development of a positive working attitude, job satisfaction and results in a higher degree of organizational commitment (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Effective alignment can only occur if employees believe that their organization has appropriate values and is concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of employees and the community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Employees are also more enthusiastic to work in an organization that has a higher degree of ethics and contributes towards the welfare of employees, customers, society and is not solely focused on making profit (Hawley, 1993).

2.4 Employees Attitudes

Employee's attitude comprises of several dimensions which are used to determine the attitude of workforce. These dimensions include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, task characteristics, job involvement and career satisfaction (Guimaraes, 1996). The same attributes are being used in this study as well, only task characteristics were excluded because comparison of different tasks and their impact on employee attitude was not measured in this study.

2.4.1 Organization Commitment

It is a variable that has been the focus of attention of many researchers (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006); (Mowday et al., 1982). The concept of organizational commitment studies the relationship or a bond between an employee and their organization, the higher level of connection an individual has with the organization means that the likelihood to quit the organization is very low (Mowday et al ., 1979). It is a bond that an individual feel with the organization that results in the desire to continue membership with that organization. The higher degree of binding that an individual has with the organization results in a positive set of behaviors and it motivates one to act, this higher degree of bonding or in other words organizational commitment is more likely to result in generating interest in an individual about the survival, reputation, growth and continuity of the organization therefore in short commitment is an element that interconnects workers to an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997) and ensures organization's survival, growth and continuity (Fornes et al ., 2008; Mowday et al., 1982).

2.4.2 Intentions to Quit

Intention to quit refers to the probability of an individual to stay or leave an employing organization. It is an individual's conscious and deliberate decision to leave the organization. Many researchers believe that measuring intent to quit is better than actual turnover because of two reasons, first there is a relationship that can be established that employees first make a conscious decision in their mind about leaving the organization before actually quitting and second is that it is more practical to ask an employee about their intent than to trace those who have left the organization (Mahdi et al., 2012). Many studies have shown that employee commitment to work and withdrawal intentions are negatively correlated (Carmeli & Gefen, 2005).

2.4.3 Instinctive Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction deals with the employees' attitude towards their work, more specifically towards their achievement, responsibility, advancement and growth. Job satisfaction has an indirect relationship with turnover or intention to quit and it has a direct relationship with organizational commitment. Meaning as job satisfaction increases the likelihood of quitting decreases and the relationship between the employee and the organization gets strengthen (Milliman et al., 2003). Additionally, higher levels of job satisfaction will increase organizational commitment, as workers who are highly satisfied with their work should perceive higher benefits in keeping their association with the organization and will be less likely to quit (Guimaraes, 1996).

2.4.4 Job Involvement

This entails the level of involvement an employee has in performing their work or task and participating in various productive activities. Workers who are found to have more variety in their work and deals with a variety of people at their work feel more involved in their job (Mahdi et al., 2012). Job involvement refers to the psychological engagement of individuals with their work which in turn is affected by reward and importance of the work therefore job involvements are relevant to task aspects. Job involvement influences both organizational commitment and work satisfaction. Workers who are highly involved in their job are often also found to be highly satisfied with their works, deeply committed to the organization, and are less likely to quit the organization (Guimaraes, 1996).

2.4.5 Organization Based Self-Esteem

'Self' itself is very complicated, as it is multidimensional and is reflected in diverse attributes both internally and externally. Self-esteem is a dimension of self that deals with an individual evaluation of his self and what they think of themselves. Organizational based self-esteem (OBSE) is defined as the degree to which an employee satisfies their esteem needs by participating in different tasks and roles in an organization. In short, it is a self-perceived value of an individual of themselves as a member of an organization within the organizational context (Coopersmith, 1967); (Pierce et al.,1989). Employees with high self-esteem have a greater sense of self-efficiency, they believe that they possess the necessary skills and ability to perform organizational tasks (Bishop et al., 2000). Therefore, employees with high OBSE generally consider themselves as capable, important, efficient, meaningful, significant and worthy member of their organization.

2.5 Employee Engagement

The construct of employee's engagement has been fascinated by many researchers and it is still an ongoing and increasing focus of study for the last 15 years within both academic field and business world (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014:Bakker et al., 2011: Kahn, 1990; Harter et al., 2013). Employee engagement can be described as employee's individual sense of responsibility reflected in their initiatives, adaptibility and persistence for achieving orgaizational objectives. (Carter et al ., 2016). It can also be defined as a fulfilling work related mindset that is characterized by dedication, vigour and absorption in work. (Schaufeli et al ., 2002). Engagement is an important estimator of a person's behaviors and attitudes in the context of achieving organizational results (Albrecht, 2010); (Carter et al., 2016); (Christian et al., 2011); (Halbesleben, 2010); (Macey et al., 2009). Many researchers have found a positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. Higher level of engagement results in higher productivity and thus increases the overall efficiency of the organization (Carter et al., 2016).

2.6 Relationship between Spirituality at workplace and Employees' Attitude

It is supported by many research studies that there is a positively significant relationship between workplace spirituality and employees' attitudes however there are few studies which have specifically studied the dimensions of workplace spirituality and the variables of employees' attitude (Milliman et al., 2003). These dimensions of workplace spirituality namely meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of values all contributes towards well-being of employees and thus develops a positive attitude which in turn results in a higher degree of efficiency. Furthermore, this positive attitude of the employees reflects in their behavior and commitment to their work (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). The level of spirituality obtained by workers reflects in their sharing, mutual obligation and commitments. This means that not only do they work well as an individual but also significantly contributes as a team member (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Although studies have found that higher level of spirituality results in the development of a positive attitude of employees however the relationship is very complex and multidimensional. It is a growing area of interest of many researchers to hypothesize and objectively predict its impact (Kolodinsky et al., 2003); (Sheep, 2004).

H1: Relationship between Spirituality at workplace and Employee attitudes.

2.7 Relationship between Spirituality at workplace and Employee's Engagement

The term employee's engagement and its impact on organizational performance have been researched many times in the past however recent studies have found that there is still very little information found about its impact on organizational outcome (Carter et al., 2016).

Researchers believe that individual engagement or disengagement from their task varies under different circumstances. Engagement can be defined as an individual expression of self in the task or work performed that promotes attachment to work and to other members, personal commitment both physically and emotionally and activeness in the role or work being performed (Kahn, 1990). Researchers believe that employee's engagement is likely to result in higher levels of motivation and enhanced job performance. There is also a strong positive correlation found between workplace spirituality and employees' engagement meaning that workers having a higher level of spirituality may feel more valued, inspired and encouraged (Saks, 2006). The idea behind the relationship is organizational culture that enhances workplace spirituality results in providing employees with opportunities for learning, social support from other members and positive reinforcement in their task, thus employees feel more engaged in their task and turn feels obligated to provide greater efforts and focus in their work (Carter et al., 2016).

H2: Relationship between Spirituality at workplace and Employee engagements.

3. Research Methodology

This research was primarily focused on the banking sector; therefore, convenience sampling was used first for the selection of banks and afterwards simple random technique was used for sample selection (Utami et al., 2021). Selected samples were either requested to fill the questionnaire online or were handed out in person. Hence, the study used online and offline mediums both. In offline, a total of 400 hard copies of the instrument was distributed. The instrument mentioned the purpose and objectives of the study. Whereas, a Google form was used to develop the instrument, and distributed to around 1100 target audiences using Facebook, individual messages, Whatsapp individual and groups. The study received a total of 411 responses from both sources. On the received sample, the invalid and incomplete responses were removed, and the final sample retained was 250. For SEM analysis a minimum of 100-200 sample size is required for the data normality assumption test to be fulfilled (Hair et al., 2016). Employee attitude and engagement was measured through a self-reported questionnaire as supported by many past researches. For this study as well, a questionnaire was developed to measure different dimensions of workplace spirituality, employee attitude and engagement. Variables were measured on a five-point rating scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Dimensions with their measuring items are listed below:

Meaningful work. This dimension was measured through five items and the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.95. Sense of community. Five items were developed by researchers of this study for the measurement of this variable, calculated Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.918. *Alignment of values*. Six items were used for the measurement of this variable and the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.907. Organization commitment. Six items related to organization commitments were used to measure this variable. The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.889.

Intention to quit. Three items were used in this study for the measurement of intention to quit. The calculated Cronbach's alpha value was 0.943. *Intrinsic work satisfaction* was measured through four-point item and Cronbach's alpha value for intrinsic work satisfaction was 0.875.

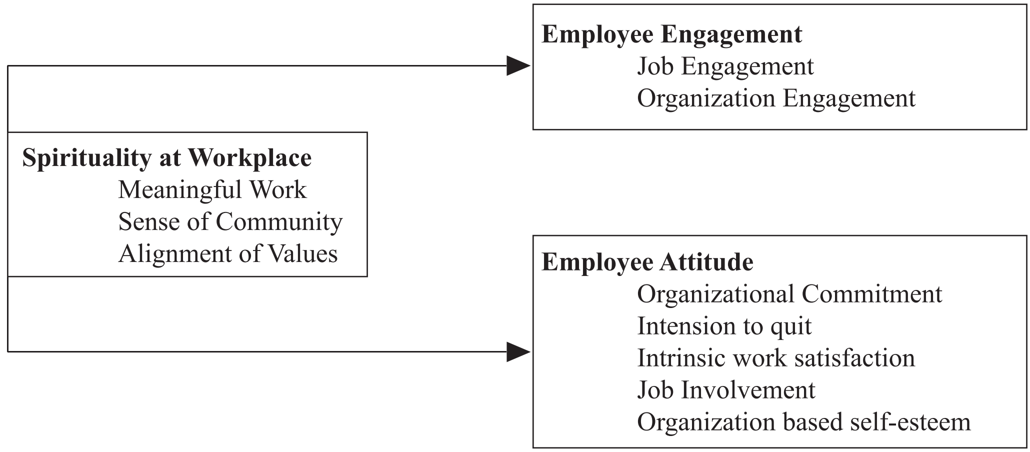

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: Research Model

ob involvement. The job involvement variable was measured through four items as supported by the literature. The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.879. *Organizational based self-esteem* (OBSE). The OBSE variable was measured through five items. Cronbach's alpha value was calculated at 0.945. *Employee Engagement*. Employee engagement was measured through two further dimensions as supported by the literature. First was *Job engagement* that was measured through five items having calculated Cronbach's alpha value of 0.795. The second was *Organization engagement* that was measured through six items having Cronbach's alpha value of 0.765.

In this research SPSS was used for reporting the descriptive statistics and for inferential statistics, PLS-SEM was applied using SmartPLS. In the structural equation modelling (SEM) measurement and structural model was applied (Purnamasari et al., 2020). In the measurement model, reliability, validity, and fitness indicators were obtained. However, in the structural model, the results of the hypotheses were used. The study applied the measurement model twice, as in the initial measurement model, outer loadings of the items were not found satisfactory (Hair et al., 1995).

4. Results

The descriptive statistics were checked using SPSS for demographic variables. It was found that male dominates the study with 60.6% however, female respondents were also in significant numbers. This was achieved as the banking sector of Pakistan has a good representation of female staff whether in the branch banking or the head/regional offices of the banks. The education of most of the respondents was above graduation degree, this represents that the banking industry of Pakistan consists of educated individuals as the hiring criteria for branch and office level jobs is at least graduation. The study found that most of the respondents have experience of at least 1 to 6 years. However, the participation of high to low experience holders was also there. After analyzing the demographic profiles of the respondents, the study proceeded towards testing the data collected. For this purpose, the study used PLS algorithm due to the formative-reflective model.

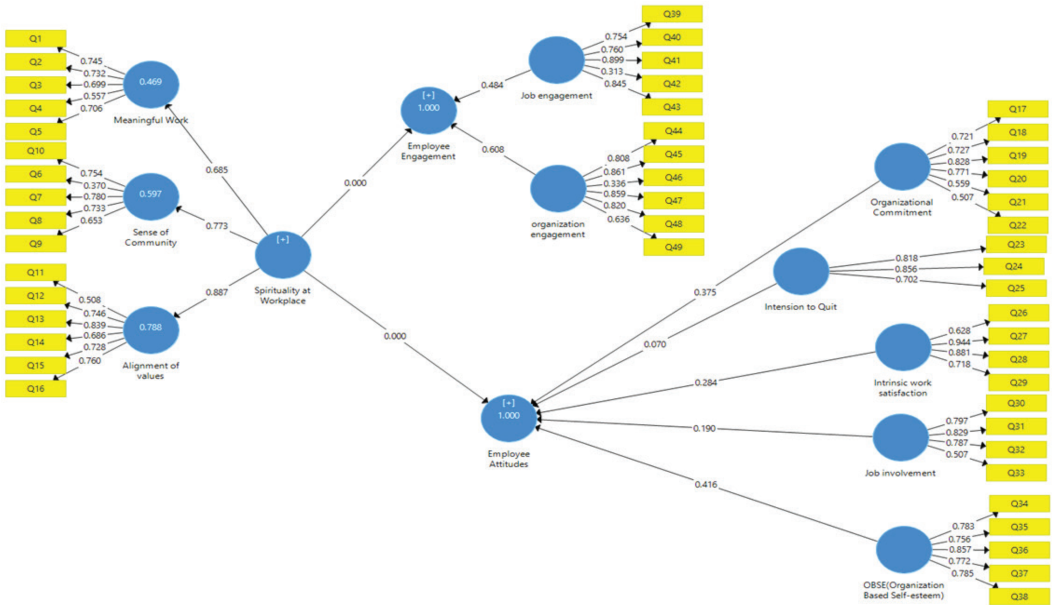

Figure 2: SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2: Initial measurement model

The initial measurement model found some issues with regards to items' outer loadings as shown in Figure 2 of the study. There were around 10 items found less than the thresholds mentioned by (Hair et al., 2017); (Hair Jr. et al., 2016). Studies discussed that values of outer loadings of the items less than the criteria affect the further measures of reliability and validity, hence, it is better to be removed to get the further values correct (Hameed & Khan, 2020). It was therefore decided to remove the items and test the measurement model again.

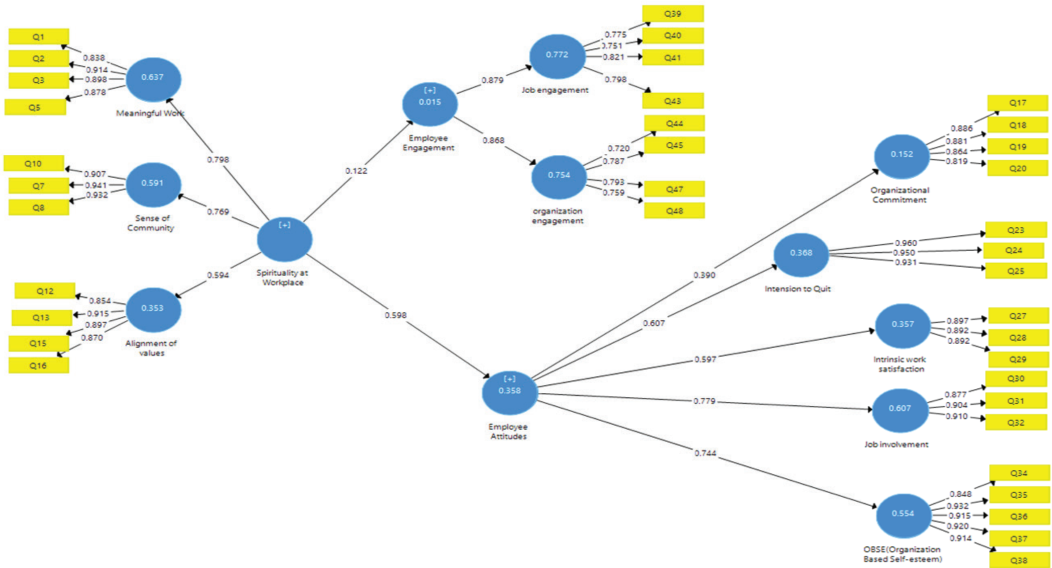

Figure 3: Finalized measurement model

The model was tested again using the PLS algorithm after deleting the items with low outer loadings. The new model found that all items are now meeting the standard value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2016). Further, there were two main reliability indicators, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to analyze the reliability of the data. For both the indicators, values should be greater than 0.7, the Table 1 of the study found that all the constructs meet both criteria of reliability, the resulting values were more than 0.7 (Khan & Hameed, 2019). For the validity of the data, two measures checked were, average variance extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity. Table 1 of the study shows that all constructs have AVE values above 0.5. This means that the constructs are explaining more variance than the error in the data. Hence, as per AVE, the data is found valid (Khan & Hameed, 2019b).

Table 1
Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Alignment of values	0.907	0.909	0.935	0.782
Employee Engagement	0.828	0.834	0.870	0.457
Intension to Quit	0.943	0.962	0.963	0.897
Intrinsic work satisfaction	0.875	0.891	0.922	0.798
Job engagement	0.795	0.801	0.866	0.619
Job involvement	0.879	0.879	0.925	0.805
Meaningful Work	0.905	0.907	0.934	0.779
OBSE (Organization Based Self-esteem)	0.945	0.948	0.958	0.821
Sense of Community	0.918	0.921	0.948	0.859
Organization engagement	0.765	0.770	0.850	0.586

Table 2 of the study represents the R squares. Since there were two endogenous constructs namely employee attitude and employee engagement, therefore two R squares were calculated. The values of R squares for both the constructs were different, for employee attitude, a moderate R square value was found whereas, for employee engagement, the effect of the model was very weak, shown by the low value of R square (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2
R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Attitudes	0.358	0.355
Employee Engagement	0.015	0.011

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is new induction for calculating discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modelling. The HTMT ratio for variables namely Alignment of values, Employee Engagement, Intensions to quit, Instinctive work satisfaction, Job engagement, Job involvement, Meaningful work, OBSE (Organization based self-esteem), Organizational Commitment, Sense of community, Spirituality at the workplace, Organizational Engagement were calculated. For variance-based models, HTMT is the most effective way of determining the discriminant validity in the data (Hair et al., 2016). The study found all values to be less than 0.85. However, some of the variables were above 0.85 and this is due to higher order constructs, and hence they may be ignored.

Table 3

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Alignment of values	Employee Engagement	Intension to Quit	Intrinsic work satisfaction	Job engagement	Job involvement	Meaningful Work	OBSE (Organization Based Self-esteem)	Organizational Commitment	Sense of Community	Spirituality at Workplace	Organization engagement
Alignment of values												
Employee Engagement	0.136											
Intension to Quit	0.481	0.123										
Intrinsic work satisfaction	0.111	0.205	0.158									
Job engagement	0.100	1.074	0.072	0.212								
Job involvement	0.399	0.076	0.346	0.384	0.050							
Meaningful Work	0.194	0.107	0.388	0.237	0.074	0.268						
OBSE(Organization Based Self-esteem)	0.404	0.105	0.225	0.395	0.074	0.483	0.242					
Organizational Commitment	0.270	0.105	0.066	0.081	0.112	0.292	0.053	0.268				
Sense of Community	0.214	0.176	0.355	0.406	0.101	0.355	0.511	0.311	0.063			
Spirituality at Workplace	0.753	0.196	0.590	0.343	0.130	0.487	0.873	0.458	0.191	0.814		
organization engagement	0.143	1.085	0.150	0.152	0.647	0.087	0.118	0.115	0.075	0.216	0.222	

In table 4, the p-value of the direct relationship between spirituality at workplace and employee attitudes is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 which means the direct relationship of Spirituality at workplace and employee attitudes is significant and positive. Whereas spirituality at workplace and employee engagement relationship was also found positive and significant. The p-value of the relationship was below 0.05, though, the influence of spirituality at the workplace on employee engagement was around 12.2%. The t value of the direct effects of Spirituality at workplace and employee attitude is 9.494 and Spirituality at workplace and employee Engagement is 2.026 (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2016; Khan & Hameed, 2019). The threshold is minimum 1.64 as this value meeting the threshold which means that both the direct relationships were found positive and significant. All the dimensions of the construct's spirituality at workplace, employee engagement and employee attitudes were found highly significant to their main constructs.

Table 4
Path Coefficients

Path Coefficients	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Spirituality at Workplace > Employee Attitudes	0.598	0.605	0.063	9.494	0.000
Spirituality at Workplace > Employee Engagement	0.122	0.125	0.060	2.026	0.043

5. Discussion

Spirituality at the workplace in this new era is gaining popularity as companies and policymakers are realizing its importance and are looking to investigate its impact on organizational outcomes. At current time, there are many socio-economic challenges like workers' layoff, decrease in job satisfaction, increasing job-related stress and burnout, technological advancement, unethical corporate behaviors and many more (Gupta & Singh, 2016). Hence it is important for the policymakers, human resource department, psychological scientists, and academicians to control the damage and bring a paradigm shift and they believe that it can be done by enhancing workplace spirituality. The study used three main constructs that were spirituality at work place, employee engagement and employee attitudes. For spirituality at work place, three dimensions were used namely meaningful work, sense of community and alignment of values. Two dimensions were taken for employee engagement that were job engagement and organization engagements. There were five dimensions used for measuring employee attitude which included organizational commitment, intentions to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, and organization-based self-esteem. All the dimensions were found highly significant to their main constructs. The study proposed two hypotheses in its higher order model, it was found that spirituality at work place has a significant and positive impact on the employee engagement and employee attitudes.

5.1 Conclusions

The initial measurement of the research model revealed some issues with respect to the measuring items which were found to be less than the expected threshold of the technique and were therefore removed (Hair et al., 2017;Hameed & Khan, 2020). Revised testing of the model resulted in Cronbach's alpha value and composite reliability to be above the required 0.7 value (Hameed & Khan, 2020) as shown in Table 1. The table also showed Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity to be above 0,5 thus the data was found to be valid (Hameed & Khan, 2020). This research is conducted on the banking sector and data was collected from different banks. Our sample size of 250 respondents was more than adequate to test the higher-order model (Hair et al., 2016). For the two main hypotheses, p-value came significant and below the threshold of 0.05 (Utami et al., 2021) (Hair et al., 2016) (Hameed & Khan, 2020) proving that spirituality at workplace positively and significantly influence both that is employee's attitude and employee's engagement. It means that workplace spirituality if adopted by organizations can result in a positive employee's attitude and a higher level of employee's engagement thus resulting in higher performance and better profitability for the organization (Purnamasari et al., 2020 Utami et al., 2021). This study showed the impact of workplace spirituality on other organizational outcomes namely employee engagement and attitudes. The study proved the importance of workplace spirituality and have shown empirical evidence on the relationship between workplace spirituality and employees' attitude and engagement. Moreover, it was proved in the study that having spiritual values in an organization, can lead to better efficiency and performance by the workforce which ultimately increases productivity and ensures the growth of an organization.

5.2 Theoretical Contribution

There is reluctance in organizations about promoting spirituality at the workplace, this is because of the overlapping definition of spirituality and religion, this perception of mixing spirituality with religion is quite old (Broadhurst, 2021) however this study has shown that spirituality has social dimensions as well and a person can be spiritual without being religious (Utami et al., 2021). This study has provided a better understanding of the dimensions of spirituality. Spirituality at the workplace is relatively a new phenomenon, this research has attempted to make management realize that there are many advantages of workplace spirituality for the organizations and especially to those in the banking sector and a better understanding of the same can result in increased performance of the overall organization (Indradevi, 2020).

5.3 Practical Contribution

Workplace spirituality if properly implemented can be beneficial in the long run for the organization as it will increase productivity, reduce turnover and increase overall profitability. From individual perspective workplace spirituality increases well-being, organizational culture, relationship with other employees and have also been found to reduce stress. Therefore, it is important e especially for banks operating in Pakistan to have a look at these findings and design strategies accordingly in order to enhance workplace spirituality and in turn increases the bank's performance. Workplace spirituality can provide work-life balance, harmony, and commitment towards the organization.

Moreover, this will also serve other purposes of the organizations like achieving performance goals, proper employee selection, employee rewards and others. Ultimately, it is the job of HR to make the workplace supportive of their employees, especially where the communication is abundant (Indradevi, 2020).

It is also important to note that spirituality at the workplace should not be considered as a solution to all the problems of any organization rather as a tool for increasing performance (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008). Workplace spirituality helps individuals in finding meaning and purpose in their work, nurturing and strengthening the employee-organization relationship and it also aligns individual values with organizational values thus reducing employees' turnover and therefore should be used as a tool by organizations for increasing performance.

5.4 Limitations and area for future research

Like other, this study is also not free from limitations. The model proposed in the study was based on higher order constructs and hence, it leads to a reduction of hypotheses. Future studies in the area should explore more relationships of spirituality with citizenship behavior, personal goals, job involvement, task characteristics and others (Indradevi, 2020). Secondly, the study has used the data from the banking sector only, therefore cannot represents the results of all (Purnamasari et al., 2020). Therefore, generalization of the results of the banking sector needs to be carefully evaluated and further research is required in other fields as well. It is also recommended that future studies apply the model on various socio-economic groups and also on cross cultures. This will further establish the validity and reliability of the model adopted. Third, the study has collected the data using cross-sectional method, future studies are recommended to collect longitudinal data so that time analysis may reveal the actual levels of turnover.

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